Zutopia

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Rating:
Teen And Up Audiences

Archive Warning:
No Archive Warnings Apply

Category:
Gen

Fandom:
僕のヒーローアカデミア | Boku no Hero Academia | My Hero Academia

Relationship:
Midoriya Izuku & Nedzu, Bakugou Katsuki & Midoriya Izuku, Midoriya Inko & Midoriya Izuku, Aizawa Shouta | Eraserhead & Midoriya Izuku, Midoriya Izuku & Uraraka Ochako, Midoriya Izuku & Shouji Mezou, Dabi | Todoroki Touya/Takami Keigo | Hawks, Midoriya Izuku & Toga Himiko, Midoriya Izuku & Shinsou Hitoshi, Midoriya Izuku & Todoroki Shouto, Kouda Kouji & Midoriya Izuku, Kouda Kouji & Shinsou Hitoshi, Midoriya Izuku & Monoma Neito

Character:
Midoriya Izuku, Nedzu (My Hero Academia), Aizawa Shouta | Eraserhead, Midoriya Inko, Bakugou Katsuki, Uraraka Ochako, Uraraka Ochako's Parents, Kayama Nemuri | Midnight, Ectoplasm (My Hero Academia), Yamada Hizashi | Present Mic, Yagi Toshinori | All Might, Sasaki Mirai | Sir Nighteye, Shouji Mezou, Kouda Kouji, Shinsou Hitoshi, Todoroki Shouto, Dabi | Todoroki Touya, Iguchi Shuuichi | Spinner, Monoma Neito, Toogata Mirio, Hadou Nejire, Amajiki Tamaki, Toga Himiko

Additional Tags:
Mentor Nedzu (My Hero Academia), Sadistic Nedzu (My Hero Academia), Genius Midoriya Izuku, Terraforming Mars (the game), Online Friendship, until its not online anymore because Nedzu throws hands, Young Midoriya Izuku, he's 8, which makes things both better and worse, World Domination, Betaed, for once, Board Games, Tabletop games, Card Games, Inko is not a bad parent, but that doesn't mean she's a good one, Sheriff of Nottingham (game), Love Letter (game), All Might is weak to children, Uraraka Ochako

is a Good Friend, Cute Uraraka Ochako, BAMF Uraraka Ochako, Bakugou Katsuki is Bad at Feelings, but eventually, Bakugou Katsuki is a Good Friend, Cute Midoriya Izuku, Insider (game), Deep Sea Adventure (game), Fix-It of Sorts, Found Family, Monoma Neito and Toga Himiko are Siblings, more like cousins, Quirkless Midoriya Izuku, Animal Death, in like one chapter, that is marked

Language:
English

Collections:
Absolutely favorite works, Just sum of ma fav broccoli boi fic, Bnha Bookclub Discord Recs, Dad Vibes, Best of our resident gremlins✧, Love these stuff UwU, Bnha bests, its-yaboijojo Read Later/ Favorites, Fics which radiate chaos, Void's BNHA Favorites :D, phoenix's my hero academia - best fics, MHA Fanfics That Are Better Than Sleep, None For Yall, ilyroki's reread list, Plus Ultra! MHA Fics, BNHA BEST SHORT STORIES TO EVER GRACE THE INTERNET, woo we're popping off (top fic recs), hey_look_at_all_these_hidden_gems, L'sFavs, Lady's collection of PERFECT fics., nonsense station's discord recs!, Mellow's Five Star Fics, Fics_i_keep_track of because I can't go through my history, Quirkless, Deku Has A Brain, Quality Fics, Lex's Favorite BNHA Fics ٩(●˙▿˙●)۶, isabella9792_readinglist, Coda, My hero academia, bumblebee's fav BNHA fics! :-D, fics i can and will stay up to 3am to re-read, Shadow's Favorite Reads, FreakingAmazingFics, FinishedBooks, 📚 Fanfic Forum Discord Recs, call 911 for I have died at the sheer perfection that are these fics, BNHA Recommendations, absolute best picks, Ace's Favorite FIcs, My Favourite Bnha stories to read, My Favourites to read, BAMF, superior deku fics, Complete fics I want to read (Nightowls), Best_Goddamn_Stories, Top bnha fics ✧, Whole Ass Novels, Magnolia's Favourite Fics, Shady BNHA Faves (Including Crossovers), 1Ids a Bitter's Life Sweetener, Finished Fics (bnha), jrmuffin's favorites, ☆ Little Red's BNHA Library ☆, the perfect fic doesn't exi-, great fics from all fandoms :), All the best fics ive ever read, if these were books i'd buy them (aka my favorites on here), Worth It BNHA Fanfics - Completed, 10/10 Would Read Again, Favs mesmo, Epitome of Writing, Kai's Eclectic Collection of Fics, Fics That Warm My Soul, BaNHAmmer, Good Completed MHA Fics, You haven't lived if you haven't read this, The Goodest Shit™, ❁ Comfort Fics❁, Works Loved By Luna04, mort's bnha favorites!!, ☆ <100k Fav Fics Bnha ☆, Would read again, Typsy's Dragon Hoard, The ☜ʖ̫Fairest☞ʖ̫ of Them All, my finished reads, Autiser's Favorites, amazing stories i really liked, Partshally read mha fics, S.T.I.L.L.,

traumastudents, Stories That Are Cool, □the bnha icebin□, Quirkless!Deku Fics, Jaded Discord Server Recommendations, I will re read it again insted of studying for sure, ✧I don't have a personal life✧, Fanfiction ***I*** Deem Worthy Of The Name, Like A Favorite Sweater, MHA_fanfics_because_idk, hixpatch's all time favorites, Fics I can and regularly do re-read, The Good Stuff n All That Jazz, Todo lo que puedo llegar a OLVIDAR, Amazing fics :D, Boku no Hero Academia Fanfics, I'm manly enough to admit I cried reading these, These fics made me scream, The Overly Toasted Bagel Collection, Fics Al has Finished Reading, Al's Favorite Stories, my personal stash of good bnha shit, Martian's Delights, bnha dekuism, BNHA TikTok Recs That Were Actually Good, Best of the Best, Great MHA, bookworx26's marvelous collection of BNHA fics, Hand-picked by a picky-person, Boku no hero academia, I've given my heart and soul for this fic, hufflepuffdemiwizard's completed works, BnHA Golden Collection, Izu is a chaos gremlin and/or maybe adopts everyone (TiaLee), critically picked, Planning to read - bnha - what am I doing with my life, Bnha fics that give me a reason to live™ <3, My Entire History, Shit worth rereading, Mosscantwrite's mha faves, Must Read Books and Series, THE 🎵 UBIQ □ ☠ THE 🎭 UNIQUE 🏵, Best of BNHA, can you guess my name?(hint its NOT deku), I'll come back, Villan/hero\vigilante Izuku, My Favorite MHA Fanfics, Finished, Favoritefics54, My_Favorites9, BNHA fics that I lost but oh my gosh I found them and so help me All Might I will NOT LOSE THEM AGAIN, BNHA/MHA, All kinds: BNHA's Fics version, bunnies' favorite fics, Got 99 problems but these ain't one, Every BNHA Ever, The Forest, SIMP'S GREATEST OF ALL TIME, v3n0n4t's bookshelf, PrintWaitinglist9792

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Zutopia

by Itslivybear

Summary

Nedzu isn't fond of many humans, but he was rather fond of strategy games, one of which led him to meet a rather curious and interesting human with the username of "Greenbean." He found himself looking forward to their games, until one day, he got a shocking realization that Green was not only a child, but a bullied one, and suddenly he had someone to protect.

And if he taught the child how to take over the world in the process, well, he *was* Nedzu, after all.

Notes

As promised, here is the Nedzu and Izuku take over the world fic!

See the end of the work for more notes

A Case Study in Running a Planet

Nedzu sat back in his chair with a hum, eyes darting over the screen in amusement.

He had always found chess rather boring, simple in its complexity, and after thoroughly trouncing every opponent in Japan, he had moved on to other strategy games, those certainly less common than something as ancient as chess.

One such game he was rather fond of was Terraforming Mars. As the name suggests, you start with the red planet with no oxygen, low temperature, and no water or greenery to speak of. Through the course of the game, using cards and your corporate abilities and specialties, you make an infrastructure to hopefully terraform the most of Mars and claim dominion over the planet. It can play several people, up to 5, but Nedzu always preferred a single player or two player game, despite three players being the most popular.

It was a card based board game, which translated well to the online mode, and each game was different. Of course, certain strategies could be utilized in all games, but the corporation you represented changed every game, and each had its own specialty and abilities. There were more in the expansions, of course, but some of the basic corporations were very exciting. For example, Ecoline lets you start with 2 plant production, 3 plant resources in hand, and 36 MC, or the game currency, at the start of the game. Furthermore, when placing a greenery tile, it will cost you 7 plants instead of 8, like it would for most others. Since greenery tiles directly translate into victory points at the end of the game, this corporation will likely focus heavily on plant production and greenery. Another interesting one is Inventrix. You draw three cards for free at the start of the game, where otherwise you have to pay 3 MC per card, and you start with 45 MC. Whenever a card has a specific requirement, like having the oxygen above or below a certain level, or the temperature, or number of oceans, the requirements can be changed by +2 or -2 steps, your choice. Surely handy for cards that have explicit requirements, and you get starting cards besides.

All in all, the game was different every time, some things left entirely up to chance, and that was something that excited Nedzu like nothing else. Unlike in chess, where the most diversity you get is which side you play, Terraforming Mars is different every round. No two games will be the same based on the luck of the draw for the cards, even if the players played exactly the same way every time. It was simply fascinating.

Plus, Nedzu quite liked the idea of terraforming and owning a planet. Space travel had declined when quirks first came along, so it was not something he was likely to have happen, but it was an entertaining idea. In addition, he supposed that being the principal of UA was a bit like terraforming a planet. Cultivate the right environment, and all that.

He felt he knew many of the people who often played, finding himself playing at the same time every day in the hopes of meeting one specific player. More often than not, he did indeed find them. It was rare that people would end up in a match with him and not leave, at this point, taking one look at his username, "[REDACTED]," and disconnecting. Disheartening, sure, but there was one player, "Greenbean," who always stayed, sending a "hi!!! :)" in the in game text chat.

In all honesty, he wasn't that upset that people didn't play with him, because it meant he could go a few games with Greenbean instead, which was always a treat. Even if Nedzu won, the games were very close, and the other player always gave fun reactions to actions in the chat, which Nedzu could not help but indulge. The person was very smart, and Nedzu enjoyed the time at the end of the day, when schools and most work got out, when he got to play with them.

After several months, Nedzu would posit they were friends, or at least friendly, having talked a few times about curious science topics, some related to the game, some not, when Greenbean asked a question out of the blue.

Greenbean: can I ask you a question?

[REDACTED] : of course!

Greenbean: how do I get my classmates to stop hitting me?

And Nedzu stopped.

There were a few things wrong with that. One, this was a child, someone still in school. He had guessed they were in late middle school or early highschool despite their intelligence based on their manner of speaking, but to have it confirmed in perhaps the worst way made his heart stutter, before he went into principal mode.

[REDACTED] : why are they hitting you? Are the teachers doing nothing?

Greenbean: I get in their way, I guess. And no, not really.

Nedzu's face was carefully blank.

[REDACTED] : Green, them hitting you is not your fault, you know that, yes?

Greenbean: I mean

Greenbean: if I didn't get in their way, if I was better at running, I'd probably be fine

Greenbean: it doesn't even hurt as much anymore but I'm running out of things to tell my mom

His whiskers twitched.

[REDACTED] : why aren't the teachers doing anything?

Greenbean: well

Greenbean: um

There was a pause, the game long since stalled, but Nedzu waited.

Greenbean: I'm quirkless…

Nedzu felt confusion first. Quirkless? Certainly uncommon, but that meant this child (and there was the anger again) was frighteningly intelligent all on his own. Anger came shortly after that thought. How ridiculous. Humans would try to find any reason to beat others down, even those of their own kind, and this child was kind, intelligent, and curious, all traits Nedzu was constantly looking for in students.

Greenbean: i understand if you don't want to play anymore

Greenbean: honestly I should probably just keep to myself

Greenbean: I really liked the games we did play!

Nedzu pushed down his anger to reassure his gaming partner.

[REDACTED] : why would I stop playing with you because of something you cannot control?

[REDACTED] : in addition, you are one of the only ones who can go toe to toe with me, and that's without an intelligence quirk like mine; very impressive, Green!

He knew the quirkless statistics. It was part of the reason he had lifted the ban on quirkless students, hoping that if UA led the charge, other highschools would stop the discrimination for a subset of people who were just as capable and arguably far less of a liability than most people.

His snout twitched in amusement as the child immediately latched on to his quirk. Quirks had been a favorite topic of them both, but they had thus far avoided talking about their own. Still, Greenbean had revealed their status, it was only fair Nedzu do the same (plus, it effectively got the child off the spiral of negative self-worth, no doubt enforced in their school).

Greenbean: oh wow, that's pretty rare!

Greenbean: and it makes a lot of sense, you're really good at this game :)

Greenbean: there aren't many heroes with an intelligence quirk, but I know Nedzu, the principal of UA is one, and he's really cool!

Greenbean: does it speed up your mental processes or make you better at retaining information?

Greenbean: oh! Does it give you multitasking abilities? I know current research says most people can't actually multitask effectively, so that'd be a really cool quirk, but it would probably require multiple processing systems since the human brain isn't designed to handle multiple thought processes simultaneously

[REDACTED] : there are actually other heroes with intelligence based quirks, but it technically does all of those things!

[REDACTED] : perhaps not the multitasking, as, like you said, it's not very effective, but my thoughts are indeed very fast and I am rather good at retaining information.

Greenbean: that's so cool! What do you call it?

Nedzu smiled to himself.

[REDACTED] : High specs, of course! :)

Greenbean: woah, that's the name of nedzu's! Do you have the same quirk as him?

[REDACTED] : I certainly hope so!

[REDACTED] : after all, I am him!

He chuckled, glad to have gotten off the topic of the bullying, even if he would likely go back to it eventually as Greenbean typed, then deleted, typed, then deleted, and Nedzu was more than patient with the response.

Greenbean: ?!?!?!?!?!?!

Greenbean: you're nedzu?!

Greenbean: wait is this a prank

Nedzu's heart fell.

[REDACTED] : I can assure you it's not. If you would like, you can send me an email, and I will reply with a code word of your choosing!

Greenbean: wait, are you sure?

[REDACTED] : perfectly! Nedzu's, or I suppose, *my* email is public knowledge on the UA website. Make the subject of your email your favorite corporation, perhaps!

Greenbean: uhhhhh ok!!

Greenbean: oh, the code word is um

Greenbean: katsudon!

Nedzu smiled and tabbed out of the game, opening his email and refreshing every few seconds until he got an email from one smallmight08@mail.yahoo.co.jp , with the subject line “Teractor,” an earth based corporation. The message was a simple “hello” and nothing more, and he was quick to send back the given codeword with a smiley face, tabbing back into the game as soon as it sent.

[REDACTED] : sent :)

Greenbean: hoksdsdgfajhsdbc

Greenbean: YOU’RE REALLY NEDZU???

Greenbean: I’VE BEEN TALKING TO NEDZU?????????

Greenbean: *I’VE BEEN PLAYING GAMES WITH NEDZU?!?!?!?!?!?!?!*

[REDACTED] : and won several too!

Greenbean: oh holy moly I’ve beaten nedzu before

Greenbean: at a *strategy game*

Greenbean: ok I can die happy now

Greenbean: um! Thank you, Nedzu sir, for playing games with me! I know you’re probably pretty busy…

[REDACTED] : nonsense, I look forward to meeting you on the battlefield every evening :)

Greenbean: oh jeez, I play video games with the principal of UA almost every day

Greenbean: hang on I’m going to need a minute

[REDACTED] : on a different topic, Teractor is your favorite corporation?

Greenbean: oh, yeah! I like playing earth cards anyway, so getting a cost reduction on them is nice. Plus it’s like, an homage to home, right?

[REDACTED] : quite right! I imagine the 60 starting cash doesn't hurt either?

Greenbean: oh, no, gives me flexibility early game

Greenbean: if not I like Ecoline

[REDACTED] : ah, that would have been my guess, from your name. You seem to favor greenery and oceans rather than cities

Greenbean: hehe, yeah, I guess I do

[REDACTED] : tell me, Green, you know who I am, what can I call you?

[REDACTED] : unless you'd rather I go with Green like usual, or perhaps Small Might ;)

Greenbean: aksjhakd I forgot that was my email address ;-;

Greenbean: um! You can call me Izuku!

Greenbean: if you want to

[REDACTED] : of course, Izuku! And of course, you can call me Nedzu :)

[REDACTED] : now, shall we finish this game?

Greenbean: oh, yeah! Lets!

Nedzu smiled, tabbing out briefly to put in a request with the police for any files they had on a quirkless boy named Izuku. He was not going to let the question from earlier go unpunished for whoever dared to put down this kind, smart child.

There would be hell to pay.

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Izuku was freaking out, even as he placed another greenery tile. *Huh* , he thought, *Nedzu was right, I do place a lot of greenery* . God, *Nedzu* . He had been playing with Nedzu all this time? Sure, looking back, [REDACTED] was a great player, the best he had ever found at his tender age of eight, having played this game for a few months by now, and the name fit the cryptid principal of the most prestigious high school in Japan, especially since no one really knew what he was, species wise, and he refused to confirm anything, seemingly revelling in the confusion.

He wasn't sure what had made him ask the question. Sure, he was getting bullied at school, that was a fact he was slowly starting to accept. No matter how much Kacchan had been his friend not four years ago, as soon as Izuku was revealed to really be quirkless, that went out the window.

He guessed it was because Kacchan and the others had started using the quirks on him.

It hadn't been as bad,before. Sure, it hurt, he had been lying when he told Nedzu it "didn't even hurt as much anymore," but he was running out of things to tell his mom. Cuts and bruises were one thing, he could pass those off as being clumsy, or playing too rough, but burns and minor stab wounds (the kid who could elongate his fingers discovered recently that if he grew his fingers really fast they had a chance to puncture skin, only about a quarter centimeter deep, but still enough to draw blood, like he was stabbed by a particularly vicious pencil) were much harder to explain away. For now he just tried to hide them, and the bullies were smart enough to avoid his face, but he had thought that maybe his smart and kind friend would be able to help him.

He should have known he'd ask questions, they always did before they found out he was worthless and deserved it.

But then Nedzu said he didn't.

He said it wasn't Izuku's fault, which didn't make sense. At the age of six, his teachers had inadvertently reinforced what Kacchan had been telling him - quirkless is useless, and he deserved it. After all, why else would the teachers look the other way, or even go as far as to scold Izuku for riling up the other kids. It was his fault!

But Nedzu was really smart, arguably the smartest person in Japan, if not the world, so he probably knew what he was talking about. He definitely believed what he said, for sure. Unless it was a prank…

But no, why would it be a prank? Nedzu had humored him rambling about his quirk when he *knew* Izuku was quirkless, had even finished the game and offered to play another one besides, that wasn't something someone would do, right?

Sure, people had pretended to be his friend before, but he had proof that this was indeed Nedzu, because he doubted even the best hacker could pretend to send an email from Nedzu's own, and he wouldn't even get to see Izuku's face when he revealed it was all a trick, since he didn't know anything about him, really.

Wait.

He knew his name and quirk status.

Was that enough for someone to find him? Probably not just any random person, but this was Nedzu they were talking about, almost nothing seemed impossible for the principal of UA, so maybe he'd find him just to tell him what everyone else did. Sure, it seemed like a lot of trouble to go through for some random kid, but then again, Izuku had been playing TM with him for months at this point, time Nedzu was never going to get back.

But he had called Izuku one of the only people who could go toe to toe with him, which was insanely flattering. Sure, he didn't win often, but he won every once in a while and he imagined the feeling was like what having friends would be like - pure euphoria.

Maybe he could actually get a friend this time, and if it happened to be the principal of UA and his gaming friend, then no one could really fault him for that.

An Offer You Can't Refuse

Chapter Summary

> I mean, you CAN refuse the offer but then I wouldn't have a fic so like
>
> You can't refuse.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Inko liked to think she was a good parent.

When she got pregnant, she started taking more hours in preparation for the time she wouldn’t be able to work when raising her child.

When she gave birth two weeks early and her baby boy had to spend some time in the intensive care unit, she stayed by his side, reading him stories and getting herself healthy so she’d be ready to take care of him when they could take him home.

When he was healthy enough to come home and interact with the world, she got in contact with her friend Mitsuki again and arranged playdates for their sons, ensuring he’d grow up with a friend.

When he had fallen in love with heroes and All Might, she bought him toys and played videos for him and pretended to be in danger just so he could save her.

When he had been diagnosed quirkless, she apologized; clearly something was wrong with her, because nothing could be wrong with her baby.

When Hisashi left, she stayed.

She knew that that wasn't enough, of course. She knew *she* wasn't enough when her baby's entire world came crashing down with one doctor's visit, but she was so lost. She wasn't like Mitsuki, she wasn't like Masaru, and she certainly wasn't like Hisashi. She was just Inko, and she felt like that wasn't enough.

It wasn't enough the first time her baby had come home all bruised and scratched up. He told her he was simply clumsy while playing, and she chose to believe him, pushing away the fact that he had never come home this beaten up before, not before the diagnosis.

It wasn't enough when the light slowly left his eyes and he got quieter and quieter. He used to talk and talk and talk, all the time without stopping. Now he would catch himself and stop, sitting in silence and staring off into space, lost in his head.

It wasn't enough when he finally stopped trying to play outside and asked her to help him set up a Steam account, which was a gaming client, apparently. It would let him play any number of games if he wanted to, so that he could interact with people over the internet instead of in person. That way, they could only hurt him with words, words he could mute if he needed to.

There, people could see her baby being brilliant and they never had to know he was quirkless.

Of course, he didn't always play multiplayer games. He played one game she found rather cute, Stardew Valley, and he was quick to show her all of the lovely people of the town. He got so excited when one of the characters would send him a recipe, and he loved to give them gifts.

“Look, mommy,” he said one day, pointing at one of the characters, “it’s you! Her name is Jodi, she has two sons and her husband is gone, but she’s really nice. She invited me to dinner pretty early, and she’s always doing her best!”

Inko had smiled softly. Jodi did seem very nice, and she had two boys of her own, both with rather crazy hair, much like her baby. Color Vincent’s hair green, make it a little curlier, and it was just like him.

She noticed him getting happier as time went on. He would come home from school, no doubt hiding a new injury that if she saw he would laugh off and make up an excuse for, and he would play games until dinner. After, he would help her with the dishes and chat about how much fun he had had, sometimes thanking her again for letting him get an account, and she would smile and say of course, like it didn’t break her heart every time he came home with a new bruise.

Then one day she noticed the burns.

She hadn’t wanted to consider that Mitsuki’s child had been one of the ones to latch on to her baby’s quirklessness and equate it to uselessness, being one of his bullies and attackers. They had been such good friends growing up, but she had started to notice things when they’d go over for dinner, things the boy no doubt tried to hide from her. That meant he knew it was wrong, that hurting her baby wasn’t something he should do, so maybe he wouldn’t, maybe he’d stop.

But no one else at his school had a fire based quirk, Inko had checked. In the entire school, no one could burn her baby except Katsuki, someone who was supposed to be his friend. She had to accept the reality that not only was her baby getting bullied, getting hurt, but that he wasn’t telling her about it.

She didn't point out the burns, and he didn't either. She ached for him to tell her, to trust her, but he just smiled and said school was fine.

She wasn't enough.

She didn't know if she ever would be.

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Nedzu hummed in delight, sipping his tea as he walked the halls of UA with a file in hand. He barely noticed people scurrying out of the way, looking terrified that their diminutive principal was humming and smiling as he read the file once more.

On one hand, he was even more livid than before.

Midoriya Izuku, age 8, quirkless, living in Mustafa with his mother and attending Aldera Elementary.

To think that an eight year old was being bullied over something as inconsequential as whether or not he had a quirk was almost enough for his grip on his teacup to tighten just enough to snap the handle off.

But the teacup was spared by how, on the other hand, he was very excited.
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Midoriya Izuku, age 8, quirkless, and one of the smartest humans he had ever come across, at age *eight* . Most of his 14-18 year old students were not as clever as Izuku was, and Nedzu was delighted with the prospect of getting to know him and hone his mind to even greater heights, should the boy wish to.

Hopefully, he could convince the boy's mother that homeschooling really was the best option for Izuku, and of course, Nedzu would be happy to take on the role of his teacher. Really, many of his principal duties could be automated to a degree that would give him ample time to teach Izuku all the ways that humans ticked and how to use that to your advantage.

… Maybe he'd start a bit smaller, but all in good time, of course.

He peeked into one of the rooms and smiled again. "Ah, Aizawa, just the man I was looking for! I wanted to let you know I'm going off campus and have a note on my door saying all questions and complaints should go to you! Just thought I'd let you know ahead of time."

The underground hero's eyes widened slightly and he started to say, "Nedzu, wait," like that would stop him when he was on a mission, and Nedzu smiled again before closing the door, completely aware of the chaos he had just unleashed on the poor man's class.

Eraserhead had just started working for him, along with two of his classmates, Yamada Hizashi (better known as Present Mic) and Kayama Nemuri (better known as Midnight), but already he was proving Nedzu right, one of his certainly more tolerable humans to be completely honest. Plus, he was harsh and a little vindictive, something Nedzu thrived in.

Still, that was only enough for Nedzu to give him a heads up that he

was essentially in charge at the tender age of 23, definitely the youngest member of the staff.

Oh well, a few hours probably wouldn't kill him.

He had a person to find!

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Izuku was tired.

It had been another day at school, just like all the rest, but today it just made him tired. He felt the ache almost deep in his bones, though his injuries were only skin deep, and he barely noticed anything on his walk home. His arms stung and he tried to keep them steady, locking up his elbows and keeping a deathgrip on the yellow straps of his backpack. The less he jostled them, the less it hurt, after all.

The day had gone by painfully slowly, but it was finally over, and he could just play games until dinner like always, avoiding his mother's questions like a seasoned pro. No more Kacchan, no more goons, no more teachers looking the other way, no more getting in trouble for things he either didn't do and couldn't do, or things he was in fact the victim of.

Sometimes he wished he didn't have to go to school.

This morning had been particularly bad, with his desk absolutely covered in marker. The teacher had made him clean it off and he had lunch detention for vandalizing school property, despite the fact that
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the teacher had been in the room before Izuku and watched him see the words for the first time. Kacchan had pushed his food on the ground, making it inedible, and because of lunch detention, he couldn't stay out of the classroom until the last minute like he usually did, so everyone got five minutes of "how much damage can we do before Deku cries."

Turns out, not a lot.

That didn't seem to stop them, though.

Kacchan had burned his worksheet again, so he had nothing to turn in at the end of class, earning him another zero, and then he had grasped his arm during PE, pretending to help him up when he was the one who had tripped him in the first place.

"Clumsy Deku," he scoffed, hand burning, "you keep fucking tripping. One of these days you'll snap your neck on your way down."

A little morbid for an eight year old to say, but he had probably heard it somewhere or seen it on TV. He probably didn't grasp the concept that that would likely kill Izuku. Not even Kacchan wanted that. No one had quite gotten bold enough to literally tell him to die.

He knew it was coming, though; he read enough forum posts from other quirkless people to know it was just a matter of time.

He really hoped that time didn't come for a good long while.

He reached his apartment listlessly, pausing to scrounge his face into a smile and checking to make sure his wounds were all covered before

opening the door and stepping inside.

“I’m home!”

“Oh, Izuku,” he heard his mom from the living room as he toed off his shoes, “you have a guest, sweetie!”

He paused.

That couldn’t be right.

“A guest?” He muttered, brow furrowed even as he walked further into the apartment, rounding the corner to the living room and freezing.

“Hello, Izuku! Your mother makes lovely tea, did you know that?”

He could feel his brain rebooting as he just stared, not even blinking. He vaguely registered his backpack falling, from his hand to the ground, with a thud. He opened and closed his mouth a few times, and his mother chuckled.

“Izuku, aren’t you going to greet your guest?”

Izuku blinked once more, taking in the white rodent in a suit calmly sipping tea on their couch and promptly passed out.

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Nedzu set down his teacup gently as Inko immediately shot to her feet, completely flustered. Entirely understandable, as her child has just slammed his head onto the floor. He had expected some reaction, of course, but nothing this extreme, to be certain. Izuku passing out did not enter into the realm of possibilities when Nedzu had pictured how this meeting would go.

Then, when Inko grabbed his arms to lift him up, he hissed, coming back awake from *pain* that Nedzu, perhaps, understood how it had come to this, and was reasonably upset.

He only wanted to burn down *one* building, that seemed completely reasonable. That it happened to be Aldera Elementary was for convenience and nothing else.

Inko hurriedly guided her son (and my, he certainly was tiny) to the couch before rushing off to get a first aid kit and Nedzu hopped down, making his way over.

“I’m sorry for startling you, Izuku. Are you alright? Did you hit your head?”

Green eyes blinked at him before the boy shook his head, seemingly incredibly shy now that there wasn’t a screen in the way. Nedzu gently patted the boy on the knee.

“Excellent, head injuries are always the worst. Ah, here is your mother with the first aid kit.”

“Izuku,” she blubbered, “what happened, baby?”

He looked away, trying to smile. “It’s nothing, I just tripped during PE and scraped my arms on the ground.”

She fussed over him until he reluctantly took off his uniform top, revealing angry red burns, borderline second degree, but not quite there yet. Both adults stilled.

“Izuku,” she said gently, eyes brimming with tears again, “those aren’t scrapes.”

He winced as she dabbed on burn cream. “It’s nothing, really. I’m fine.”

Nedzu climbed on the couch next to him. “You must be wondering why I’m here, or how I found you in the first place.”

Izuku blinked at the sudden topic change, but Nedzu merely smiled, unperturbed.

“I mean,” the small boy started, “you’re Nedzu, and you had my name, I figure if you really wanted to find me, you could.”

“And so I did! I do greatly enjoy our time together, and will admit I was rather worried after our conversation a few days ago, so I came up with a plan I think will benefit us both.”

Izuku merely blinked at him.

“I have already informed your mother, of course, in our lovely chat over tea in the hour before you arrived. I assumed the best time to catch you would be our usual gaming time, but wanted to meet your mother beforehand, and I must say, she is a lovely woman.” Inko blushed bashfully, turning away even as she put away the first aid kit, and he smiled to himself.

Of course, that wasn’t the only reason he had come early. If he was being bullied at school, Nedzu wanted to ensure he was safe at home. He could assume, of course, with the ability to play computer games, that he at least had some measure of freedom. However, you could also play computer games while locked in your room, so Nedzu had wanted to be sure he wouldn’t have to immediately claim this child as a ward of UA.

Luckily, Inko was lovely, if a bit overwhelmed by virtue of being a single parent.

“And what would that be, sir?”

Nedzu chuckled. “Come now, we’re friends, no need for that! But yes, I was wondering if you’d like to be homeschooled instead of attending public school.”

Izuku’s eyes immediately welled up with tears, but he managed to pause them when he frowned in confusion.

“But mum isn’t a teacher, would I be taking classes online instead?”

“Ah, no, I was wondering if you’d like to be my personal student!”

The boy blanched, mouth gaping like a fish, and Nedzu smiled to himself.

"B-but you're Nedzu!"

"Yes, and you're Izuku!"

He shook his head rapidly, green curls bouncing and hands waving fervently. "No, I mean, you're the principal of UA, I can't just be taught by you!"

"And yet, I am offering!"

Nedzu was practically beaming at this point, forcing his tail not to wag and his feet not to swing. He was giddy at the prospect, but best to stay professional and calm if he could help it.

Inko placed a hand on his shoulder, carefully avoiding the burns she had treated. "Sweetie, I think it would be good for you! Plus, he's the smartest hero, like you always say, and you've always wanted to go to UA, even if it was a little later…"

He looked up at his mother in shock. "You, you think I should do it?"

She nodded and sniffed. "I know you don't always tell me everything, but I also know that school is not… it's not kind to you, Izuku. You're most happy when you're playing your games, and I know most of the stories you've told me at dinner these past few months have been about one specific player, and he's currently sitting on our couch."

Nedzu cooed to himself. Ah, tales of their battles at the dinner table? It was incredibly endearing. He supposed that if he had someone he regularly talked to, he would also talk about the clever plays either he or his opponent had come up with.

Izuku bit his lip and looked back at Nedzu with wide green eyes. “Are you sure?”

Nedzu smiled. “Of course!”

“...Then I would like that very much, please.”

“Excellent! We can start tomorrow!”

(Back at UA, Aizawa Shouta felt a shiver go down his spine.)

Chapter End Notes

mmmmmmmmm, love that look for them, Nedzu really went "im gonna show up unannounced :)"

seems like something he would do

A Game of Liars

Chapter Summary

Izuku's first lesson with Nedzu

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Izuku found himself on a train, heading towards UA, backpack in hand.

It had always been his dream to go to UA one day, as a student no less, because it was the best hero school ever! Even All Might went there!

He had assumed, however, that this would happen later, when he was 14, and this was his highschool. But here he was, age eight, and yes, technically a student here.

He looked up at the H shaped building and walked through the gate with a deep breath. Nedzu had given him a pass so the gate wouldn't lock him out, but other than that, had not given the boy directions.

"It will be a fun puzzle! All you have to do is find my office! Worry not, it won't be difficult for you, and the staff does know you're coming!"

It would be fine!

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Kayama Nemuri had a free block in the morning, so she used it to plan her lessons, like any responsible teacher would. If she happened to not get much done it was because it was first thing in the morning, so really, who could blame her.

She stepped outside to go to the bathroom with a sigh before she bumped into something that barely came up to her knees. She blinked and looked down, seeing a small child.

“Oh! Hello there, little guy! How’d you get in here?”

If security had failed so that a random child could just walk into UA, someone was going to die.

“Oh, um, hello Ms. Midnight,” wait, he recognized her, what the hell, “I walked? I had the pass, so the gates didn’t close…”

“How did you get a pass, kiddo?”

“...Nedzu gave it to me?”

What? Why would Nedzu give a pass to this tiny kid?

Wait a minute.

She paled and swallowed. “How uh, how old are you, sweetheart?”

He blinked up at her, shy. “I’m eight, Ms. Midnight.”

Sweet lord, Nedzu's personal student was fucking eight years old, the rest of the staff needed to be informed before it was too late. Maybe they could still get the kid out before it was too late and the rat corrupted his mind. They did *not* need another Nedzu running around, and this kid looked really sweet.

"Um, can you help me find his office? He never said I couldn't ask for help…"

No, it really was too late, she couldn't not take the kid to Nedzu at this point, he definitely had eyes on the situation and would know if she tried to defy him. God, they were all gonna die.

"Of course," she tried to smile cheerily, "you just come with me, hon."

He smiled and her heart melted a little. Maybe Nedzu couldn't corrupt this pure kiddo, maybe they'd be fine.

"Ah, thank you Kayama!" He greeted her before the door was even fully open and she watched the green boy light up at the sight of the rat.

"Wonderful to see you Izuku, and you made such good time. Good use of your resources!"

The boy, Izuku, smiled bashfully and bowed at her. "Thank you, Ms. Midnight!"

She smiled. "Of course."

She turned to go, but the rat stopped her. "Ah, and Kayama, perhaps keep all rumors of my student to yourself, hmm? I think everyone should have the chance to meet Izuku themselves, without previous bias!"

They're already biased , she screamed internally, *because he's your personal student! You just want to revel in their reactions at seeing how young this kid is and be even more terrified!*

"Sure thing, boss," she said out loud.

God, this was going to be a nightmare, and she couldn't even tell anyone so they could share her pain.

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As the door closed behind the pro hero, Nedzu's whiskers twitched in amusement. He could sense her bewilderment and distress, of course, and had a relatively idea of what was running through her head, but it was very amusing to watch her on the cameras when she realized exactly why Izuku was there.

"Wonderful. I trust the train ride was uneventful?"

The boy nodded. Good, no complications then.

"Very well, now, I do have to technically teach you the curriculum for your year, but I know you favor science, yes? Quirk science specifically."
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Izuku nodded rapidly, eyes sparkling. “Yeah!”

“Hmm, have you looked into the study of psychology at all?”

“Um… that’s the study of the brain, right?”

Nedzu grinned. “Correct! I imagine if you had an understanding of how the human brain works, it might assist you in your quirk study endeavors. Oh course, we could always learn the basic school stuffs, but it’s up to you.”

The boy blinked, contemplative. “It would be neat…”

Nedzu sat back in his chair. “How about this, we can try a lesson, and if you like it, we can continue.”

Izuku brightened and nodded. “Ok!”

“Excellent! First, we will learn about the different areas of the brain…”

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Izuku very much liked psychology, he found. It was just so fascinating to learn about the different components of the brain and how they all worked together!
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For example, at the back of his head, he had his occipital lobe, that took in the information from his eyes and figured out what he was seeing by talking to the other centers in his brain!

“But what if I was blind?” Izuku asked. “Then my eyes aren’t sending any information.”

“An excellent question! Which brings us to a new topic, neural plasticity!”

Apparently, when you were really young, your brain was just figuring out how it was going to work and devoting areas of the brain to specific things. That was why people were only considered fully mature around the age of 25 - that was when their brains stopped figuring themselves out. Because it was still figuring out how to do things, it had a pretty high plasticity, or ability to change. If someone lost half of their brain, for example, the other half would adapt to compensate for that loss.

In the case of blind people, the whole occipital lobe was appropriated for other things based on what the person was most likely to need help on.

“What are some of the things a blind person might need to be better at?”

Nedzu’s question had made perfect sense to Izuku. Blind people would need to be able to hear better, like bats, and maybe touch better, since they read with their fingers, which had always seemed rather hard to Izuku.

“Indeed,” Nedzu had smiled, “there are often more neurons in the occipital lobe devoted to a blind person’s sense of touch and

sometimes their sense of hearing to help them perceive the world better. Very good, Izuku!"

And boy, if every lesson with Nedzu was like that, he would always want to come back. Psychology and the brain were so interesting to learn about. The idea that Izuku could lose half his brain right now and he would probably be ok because he was still young was flabbergasting and exciting.

"Now, how do you feel about board games?"

Izuku blinked. "Oh, sure. I don't really mind either way…"

"Excellent! Come with me!"

He slid a box off of the shelf behind his desk and walked out of the office, Izuku trailing behind. He was taller than the principal, but not by much, so he had no trouble keeping up.

They went back to the place Ms. Midnight had found him and Nedzu walked in, Izuku having no choice to follow, even as he recognized the teacher's lounge.

"Ah, Aizawa, Ectoplasm, wonderful, you don't have class right now. Could I impress you for a game with me and Izuku?"

Izuku looked up at Ectoplasm in wonder. Sure, he knew UA only employed heroes as teachers, especially after seeing Ms. Midnight, but to see another one in the flesh? He felt like he was going to vibrate out of his skin, but he managed to contain himself and offer a shy wave.

The other man, Aizawa, didn't look nearly as familiar, but he sighed. "This is your personal student, then?"

"Yes, this is Izuku."

"Hello, Aizawa, sir."

"Kid, I am definitely not old enough to be a sir. Anyway, it depends on the game."

"Ah, it isn't one I've had you play before, don't worry! This will be new to everyone! In fact, even I have only read the rules!"

Ectoplasm sighed. "Sir, that is more than enough for you, but something tells me I don't really get to say no."

"You would be correct!"

He hopped up to a table in the back of the room and Izuku sat himself nearby as Nedzu opened the box and started taking out cards and such.

"This game is called Sheriff of Nottingham! It is based somewhat on the old Robin Hood stories, and the goal is simple. We are each merchants trying to get our goods to market. Our goods options are apples, cheese, bread, and chickens, and then, of course, contraband! The Sheriff role will rotate between us, and everyone else will put cards in their bags. You declare what is in your bag, all legal of course, and the sheriff will determine if you can go to market or if he

wants to search your bag. If you indeed have what you say you have, the sheriff has to pay you the penalty coins for every card he was wrong about, and you go to market. If he was right, and you don't have what you said you have, then you pay him the penalty gold for every card that's contraband and must discard them. The penalty coins are listed in red on the bottom of the cards, 2 for regular goods and 4 for contraband. You can also bribe the sheriff to not check your bag, and then you go free. Deals are binding if and only if money exchanges hands and future promises are not held accountable. Are there any questions?"

"Yes," Aizawa said, "what's this on the side of the player mats?"

"Ah," Nedzu purred, "those are end game bonuses! The winner in the end is determined by who has the most money after all the goods you successfully brought to market are sold. There is a bonus for having the most and second most of any given good, including the contraband versions of the goods. You'll notice that chickens, which are worth 4 gold a piece, have the lowest bonus for having the most, whereas apples, worth 2 gold each, have the highest bonus, to even things out."

"How many cards can you take to market at once?"

"Each player has six cards in their hand they can exchange with the discard or draw piles, but you can only take five cards to market."

Izuku swallowed nervously. "What does the sheriff do when the other players are picking out what to take to market?"

Nedzu grinned. "Watching for hints, of course! If you watch someone pick up three apples, for example, and then they say they are bringing four cheese, you know that's ridiculous and can of course search their bag and take their money!"

Izuku nodded slowly. “When you bribe the sheriff, does it have to be with money?”

The principal’s grin sharpened. “Ah, no, you don’t. You can promise things in your bag or in your stall. Of course, if you promise a contraband from your bag and you bring none to market, then you do not have to pay, seeing as there *was* no contraband in your bag.

Aizawa raised an eyebrow at his question and he ducked his head with a blush. It made sense, that if you ran out of money, you could pay in goods, so why couldn’t you pay in goods otherwise?

“If there are no more questions, I believe we can start!”

They were each dealt six of the cards, the rest going into a draw pile with three face up in a stack on either side for the discard piles. Ectoplasm was the first sheriff.

Izuku had 2 chickens, an apple, and three contraband - silk, worth 8 gold, and two pepper, worth 6. Both of the discard piles had nothing but cheese and bread, so he took out the apple, discarded it, and drew from the top of the deck.

Another apple.

Nedzu went next, taking both the apple and two cards from the top of the deck, discarding two contraband (pepper and mead, worth 8) and another cheese, placing the cheese underneath the contraband to discourage people from taking it.

Aizawa ignored that and took both contraband, discarding two bread.

“And now,” Nedzu hummed, “we place our goods in our bags! As soon as they are snapped shut, you can no longer remove the items inside until you are either searched or sent to market!”

Izuku worried his lip as he watched Nedzu put four cards into the bag, Aizawa putting three. Two chickens didn’t seem like enough, even for the first turn.

Wait, it was the first turn.

He eyed the three red cards in his hand and blinked.

Ah.

He had a plan.

He snapped the bag shut, placing the rest of his hand on the table and looking expectantly at Ectoplasm, that round’s sheriff.

He looked at Izuku first, narrowing his eyes.

“I have three chickens.”

Nedzu piped up next. “Four apples!”

“Three cheese.”

“I can do this in any order, correct?”

“Oh yes, you don’t have to go in turn order.”

Ectoplasm wasted no time. “Aizawa, there is no way, you didn’t even take the cheese beneath the contraband, show me your bag.”

Aizawa wordlessly handed it over, face completely blank as Ectoplasm snapped it open, taking out the cards inside.

Three cheese.

“I believe you owe me six gold, Ecto.”

The cloning hero didn’t say a word, handing over six of his starting 50 gold and Aizawa wordlessly slipped the three cheese by his player mat.

Ecto glanced at Izuku once more before turning to Nedzu, sitting serenely and sipping tea none of them were quite certain when he’d gotten and he nervously looked at the bag.

“Four apples, you say?”

“Yes!”

Ectoplasm considered it before he sighed. “I really can’t read you. Go ahead to market.”

“Ohoho,” Nedzu chuckled, “you didn’t want to check my bag? Four apples *is* a lot…”

“Yeah no, I’m good, thanks.”

Nedzu smiled and unsnapped his bag, carefully laying out four apples on his tableau. “A wise decision. Wouldn’t want you to be 8 gold poorer, after all.”

Izuku was the last one and he looked up at the hero, completely nervous.

“Three chickens, you said?”

“Yes, Mr. Ectoplasm, sir.”

He could feel the hero searching his eyes, but he didn’t dare look away.

“Yeah, whatever, I hate that I had to go first, go to market, kid.”

Izuku silently smiled softly and snapped open his bag.

He slid three face down cards to the top of his tableau, where contraband goes.

Ectoplasm and AIzawa both did a double take, but Nedzu just cackled.

“Oh yes,” he murmured around his tea, looking at his completely innocent looking student, “this will be quite fun.”

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Nedzu ended up winning the game, to no one’s surprise. Between him and Izuku, they had most of the contraband, putting their scores much higher than either Aizawa or Ectoplasm. Ectoplasm found himself in last, Aizawa barely scraping by, but Izuku didn’t think the man minded all that much, since he looked really tired of everything.

Izuku was sad he only came in second, but it was his first time playing, and he didn’t know much about what he was doing. He had discovered he wasn’t the best at reading people, so his times as sheriff were awful, but people also didn’t expect him to be lying every time, and when he developed a pattern, he switched it up and only brought the completely legal goods to market.

The time he had declared 5 chickens had been very exciting, since having five cards to bring to market at once was rare, and he made a cool 10 gold when Aizawa decided to check him on it. He got caught a few times by Nedzu, of course, but the exhilarating feeling of slipping contraband past his mentor was incredible. Ectoplasm was an easy mark, Aizawa less so, but Nedzu was practically a fortress, so he would take any victories he could get, no matter how small.

“How did you like the game,” Nedzu asked when they were back in his office to wrap up the day.
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“It was fun! I liked the bribery aspect, because it was a lot of weighing pros and cons and seeing how much money you can get out of people, but sneaking in contraband made me feel like I was getting away with something.” He giggled, remembering the shocked look on Ectoplasm’s face that first round when he had slipped three contraband out at once, not even having anything legal.

One of his favorite things to do was pick up two or three of a card and then declare them when his whole bag was actually full of contraband. It was even better when it worked two or three rounds in a row, since clearly, he must really have the cheese in his bag this time, there’s no way he drew more contraband.

He definitely did.

A well placed sigh after drawing form the deck served his purposes well. It was quiet enough that it wasn’t obvious, but loud enough that everyone probably heard it. A sigh on drawing meant all your cards were mismatched, and that meant you’d only have a small haul this time.

Two apples, clearly.

Not a crossbow and silk, the two best contraband in the game (aside from the royal goods) at 9 and 8 gold respectively.

Clearly not.

“I am glad you enjoyed it,” Nedzu hummed, sipping his tea once more. “We might only play games like that once a week, so you can get to know the other staff and practice against people who are not

me, but it would be lovely to play different games with you. Ah, but it is time for you to catch the train home, isn't it?"

Izuku jumped, looking at the time. "Oh, yes, it is! See you tomorrow, Nedzu-sensei!"

Nedzu waved goodbye to his pupil and Izuku bounded out the door, dragging his backpack with him as he hurried to the station.

He'd have so much to tell his mom!

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In an elementary school across town, an angry blond boy glared at the empty desk.

Where the hell was the nerd?

Chapter End Notes

I hope the description of the game was enough for you guys to understand what's going on, it's a fun one and if you have the chance to play it I recommend it!

Also, hmm, an empty seat, I wonder who I can put in it?
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A Simple Game of Cards

Chapter Summary

a game of cards and a recreated experiment

Chapter Notes

the experiment featured is actually real! and it's cool as shit! Of course, I'm not going to put fake science in my fics because that's dumb, especially when there's plenty of real science that's cool as shit!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

After another week of learning, alternating lessons with further study of the brain (“technically, when I’m telling you of structure and function, it’s not really psychology, but more neuroscience, but I do find it to be a good basis!”) and regular schooling, Nedzu cleared a space on his desk and brought out a deck of cards.

“Now,” he said, “this will not be something that is purely skill based, and it doesn’t require much manipulation, but it does help with logic and making decisions based on limited information.”

Izuku nodded eagerly as the principal dealt them each six cards, placing the other in a draw pile and flipping one over to form the discard.

“Please arrange your six cards like so, and do not look at them.”

Izuku watched as he arranged the cards into two rows of three, and followed suit.

“Now, pick any column and flip them face up!”

He revealed an 8 and Ace of clubs, Nedzu revealing a six of hearts and a three of spades.

"The concept of this game is simple. Your goal is to arrange your cards in a way that minimizes the value of the cards until all six are revealed. Number cards are of course worth their value, face cards are worth ten, kings are worth zero, and fours are negative! In addition, if any column has the same number, two queens, two sevens, etcetera, they negate each other and that column is worth zero points! This also includes the fours, so do be careful, Izuku!" The rat chuckled, straightening his cards.

"I believe this is, perhaps, best learned through playing. Since I dealt, why don't you go first? You can either draw the face up card and replace one of your own with it, discarding said card, or you can take a chance and draw from the top of the deck. However, if you do not place the card you draw and instead discard it, you must flip over one of your cards. Whenever you are ready, my friend."

Izuku blinked and inspected the card that was currently face up. It was a 6 of diamonds, not particularly helpful for him, so he decided to draw from the top of the deck.

6 of clubs.

He sighed, looking at his six cards, four face down, and went to discard the card, but then he stopped, looking at Nedzu's cards.

Nedzu was showing a 6.

If Izuku discarded this 6 he was basically giving him a free zero. He

looked back at the 6 in his hands.

He'd have to use it.

Hesitantly, wanting to reveal more cards but praying he wasn't about to give Nedzu something useful, he replaced the card next to the ace, or the bottom middle, and placed the 6, flipping the card into the discard pile.

He breathed a sigh of relief at the 7 of clubs.

"Ah, rather clever, and a lucky draw! There aren't many cards below a six, but enough to be scary, hmm?"

Nedzu drew the next card, from the top of the deck and hummed before tossing onto the discard pile. Apparently, he didn't want the 5 of clubs, but he turned over his own bottom middle card, revealing the Queen of clubs.

"My, we do have a lot of clubs out so early. Your turn."

Izuku hummed. He certainly didn't want the 5 either, so he drew from the top of the deck, hoping maybe he'd get an 8 or an ace.

His heart sank.

Jack of diamonds.

Well, with cards to spare and no desire to keep a face card other than a king, he discarded it, flipping over the last of his bottom cards, revealing the 8 of hearts.

Nedzu was equally not keen on picking up the jack, and so drew from the top of the deck. His whiskers flicked in delight and he slipped the card under his 6, discarding that and revealing the 3 of hearts.

“Oh, lucky.”

“Indeed!”

Izuku drew a card from the top of the deck again, and his eyes widened.

The 4 of hearts!

He looked down at his cards, worrying his lip over what he should replace. He could go for another of his face down cards, but then he’d be one away from ending the game, with plenty of points to his name, and he might be giving up something good. He could replace one of the cards below his two remaining facedown cards, but there was the possibility that one of them was also a 4, and that would negate their usefulness.

He resolutely replaced his original 8 of clubs, above the ace, and discarded the 8.

“Ah, I was not the only one to get lucky this round. What a find!” He grinned at his mentor, and his mentor grinned back before drawing a card.

“Ah, lovely, a 2!” He slipped the two of hearts in his bottom right corner, flipping up the card he was replacing. “Oh dear.”

Izuku sat up straight, looking to see it was another 4, the 4 of spades.

He quickly grabbed it from the discard pile and replaced his 6 with it, in the bottom middle.

He grinned at his mentor. “Better luck next time, Nedzu!”

Nedzu chuckled. “Oh you. The game isn’t over yet!”

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They played several more games of Six, as it was called, and Izuku found himself enjoying it. Knowing what cards were left, running probabilities, and weighing risk and reward to see if you wanted to flip up that final card, ending the round, was incredibly exciting. After all, you didn’t have to have a low score, just lower than your opponent.

Still, the game was mostly luck with a healthy dash of strategy, so Izuku found their win loss ratio to be about 1:1, which was certainly rather fun to think about. He did end up winning that first game, the combination of the two negative 4’s was too much for Nedzu to overcome, even with only two cards actually giving him any points by the end. Nine was still much higher than three, after all.

The next lesson they had that day was finally on some of the
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psychology principles that Izuku could use in everyday life! Nedzu called them “tactics of persuasion,” which really meant that you could use them to influence how people thought and get them to see your side better.

There were, of course, the different types of arguments, and how each one appealed to the emotional or logical side of your brain. There were also tactics like distraction that were simply fascinating!

Apparently, the logic side of your brain, or System Two, the slow thinking system could only hold so many pieces of information at once before it became overwhelmed. On the other hand, System One, the fast thinking emotional and intuitive side, was rather automatic and thus didn’t need to hold information.

They had studied this before quirks, apparently, in a way that seemed really simple, and probably easy to recreate, so that’s what Izuku did, Nedzu more than happy to enlist Aizawa’s hero class into it. So, with Lunch Rush on board for the reward, Izuku went to work.

He poked his head in the door. “Um, hello?”

The students, previously in a study period, looked up at the young voice and Izuku shrank a bit under the 20 eyes that were suddenly on him, but Aizawa managed to save him.

“Izuku, what are you doing here?”

“Oh, um, I’m doing an experiment for Nedzu? He said your class was free this block and could help me…?”

Aizawa sighed. “What do you need them to do?”

He brightened, very excited. “It’s simple! They will be given a series of numbers in one room, go to another room, and have to repeat them! That’s it!”

“And how many people do you need for this?”

“Um, well, the more we have the better, for the data…”

Aizawa sighed again. “This is not mandatory, if you want to sit out, you can.”

The class erupted into excited babble, and Izuku heard one person say “he’s so cute, how can you say no to that face” and blushed.

“Um, we’ve prepared rooms for this, since we have to do it one at a time, if you want to follow me…”

It seemed like the entire class of twenty kids immediately got up to follow him as he led them to the halls that housed the meeting rooms, with the teacher lounge and the office where Nedzu was waiting at the end of the hall.

“If you could please wait in here, I’ll come get you one at a time, if that’s alright?”

He got a series of confirmations and nodded hesitantly. They were all so much bigger than him, and he was kind of tricking them. Sure,

they were going to have to memorize the numbers given, but that wasn't technically the thing they were measuring in this experiment.

Oh well, he would tell them after the fact.

He took they first student into the meeting room next door and gave them a series of 7 numbers to memorize, giving them a moment before taking them back out and walking down the hall with them. About halfway there, he stopped.

"Oh! I almost forgot, as thanks for participating, Lunch Rush is offering a reward, and we wanted to know if you'd like cut up fruit or a slice of cake?"

They startled, but mumbled "cake" before going back to repeating the numbers under their breath and Izuku smiled at them before letting them into Nedzu's office where they repeated the numbers.

It was going well!

~~~~~

At the end of the experiment, all the students were in the otherwise empty cafeteria, eating cake or fruit. Some of the cake people were looking guilty that they hadn't picked the fruit, since they were hero students and wanted to keep healthy, but he did notice quite a few people guarding their slices against their fruit cup friends.

Aizawa was standing against the wall with folded arms and Nedzu and Izuku compared both who had selected what and who messed up, if anyone.
~~~~~

The results were almost exactly as they should be, with some standard deviations.

"So, did you get what you were looking for?"

He grinned. "Yes! This definitely proves the theory!"

One of the kids chuckled. "On who's good at memorization and who isn't? I mean, it was two numbers, how hard could it be?"

Some of his peers looked at him in confusion. "Two?" A girl muttered, "But I had seven?"

There were calls on both sides of the argument, until they realized that they had just had different numbers, and they looked, confused, at the boy.

Izuku blushed and scuffed his heel while grinning. "It was a logical ruse! We were actually testing how having too much information impacts your decision making skills. People who only had two numbers didn't have as much to focus on, so they were far more likely to pick the fruit, the healthy option, but people who had to think about seven numbers were too distracted and often went with their gut, which was cake, since everyone likes cake."

The students looked at each other and down at what they were eating.

"He's right, I should have picked the fruit but I was too busy thinking about the numbers…"

There were murmurs of agreement and Aizawa raised an eyebrow beside him. “A logical ruse, huh?”

Nedzu chuckled. “It was a clever recreation of a previous experiment, and I must say it went rather well, don’t you think? Izuku, what lesson can we take from this?”

“If you distract people with too many options they won’t make good decisions!”

The class sweatdropped at the bright smile on his face when he said it, but Nedzu just patted his shoulder. “Quite right! Now, let us go back to the lesson, I would like to teach you about priming before you have to leave for the day.”

“Yes, Nedzu-sensei!”

Aizawa and his students watched the two leave, and the teacher sighed. “God, this is going to be a nightmare.”

His students silently agreed.

~~~~~

Uraraka Ochako was nervous. She was eight, and going to a new school! Her parents were a little worried about moving to the Mustafa area, but with the heroes everywhere they’d be getting more work, so they were willing to make the sacrifice. Plus, the district was safe and had reportedly good schools!
~~~~~

She let herself enter the classroom, walking in front of the board as the teacher introduced her. She wasn't used to there being this many people in one class, let alone an area in general, but she was slowly starting to get used to it and not be overwhelmed.

"Class, this is Uraraka Ochako, she just moved here! Uraraka, why don't you tell us about yourself?"

She stumbled through her introduction, telling them where she was from and how her parents were construction workers, before an angry blond boy in the back of the room loudly called out, "what's your quirk?"

The teacher scolded him for speaking out of turn, his name was apparently Bakugo, but he just rolled his eyes.

"So? What is it?"

She tapped her index fingers to her thumbs and then held her hands out, showing the pink finger pads.

"Anything I touch with five fingers will float. It's called Zero Gravity."

Some of the class oo-ed and ah-ed, but the boy, Bakugo, just sneered and sat back in his seat.

She felt a twinge of annoyance go through her. Just who did he think he was?

She narrowed her eyes at him and smiled brightly. “And I’m gonna be a hero!”

Now *that* got a reaction out of him.

She giggled as he exploded, quite literally, and the teacher reprimanded him again.

“No way! I’m gonna be the only person in this school to be a hero!”

She rolled her eyes, still smiling. “Well, we’ll see about that, Explodey!”

She trounced to her seat, which happened to be right in front of the boy, who had stilled and blinked at the nickname before scowling and turning away.

“Whatever, Round Cheeks.”

She grinned.

Yeah, this was the start of something new.

~~~~~

Katsuki didn’t know how he felt about Round Cheeks, but she was
~~~~~

sitting in Deku's spot, which meant Deku wasn't coming back. He huffed. Maybe the nerd had finally given up on being a hero…

But something didn't sit right with him. Even if he had quit wanting to be a hero, that wouldn't mean he'd drop out of school. Did something happen to him? No, Auntie would have told the old hag, who would have told him, so he would have known if the nerd had done something stupid.

He would be told if anything had happened, especially if it was serious, right?

He slammed open the door and ignored the yell from his mom.

"Oi, hag, where the hell is Deku?"

"Oh, Izuku? Didn't I tell you, he's getting homeschooled now!"

He scrunched up his brow. Homeschooled? "But Auntie works and isn't a teacher."

"Oh, yeah, apparently he has a private tutor, Inko was really happy about it. They took an interest in our little Izuku and now he's having a lot of fun, last I heard!"

Fun? *Private tutor?!* The nerd was trying to get ahead! And as if Deku could catch someone's eye with his shitty creepy notebooks and god awful muttering, so something clearly wasn't right here.

Katsuki was missing something, he just didn't know what, but by All Might he was going to figure it out.

Chapter End Notes

so I decided to put Uraraka in Aldera so that Bakugo can maybe get a redemption in this. She would absolutely fight him and go toe to toe, and she would definitely not just stand by if people were being mistreated

Six is also a real game, I think, or maybe my dad made it up, but I enjoy it quite a bit!
Hope you guys enjoyed!

(also, in case you were wondering, I did keep track of all the cards and had this whole table set up)

A Visit to the Park

Chapter Summary

Izuku accidentally naps and makes another friend (and uses his lessons to get what he wants :)!)

Chapter Notes

yeah I found links that were relevant and added them, what of it

(you don't need to read the links to get an idea of what Izuku is learning, but the first three at least are really easy to read and super fun and informative, I would totally recommend givin em a whirl!)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Izuku woke up one morning to an email from Nedzu.

Dear Izuku,

I am rather busy today with some nonsense from the Commission, so for your lesson today read the following articles and case studies, watching any attached videos!

Link

Link

Link

Link

I should be free around our old play time if you would like to play Terraforming Mars!

:)

Nedzu

Signing his email with a smile was certainly unconventional, but it did seem inline with Nedzu's personality, so Izuku just smiled back (to himself) and went to click on the first link.

Ah, so that's what he was learning about today.

This should be interesting!

~~~~~

He took a lot of notes, and was a little daunted by the small text on the last link, so since it was past lunch time anyway, he figured he'd take a break, eat something, maybe play outside to stretch his legs and get some sunshine. Plus, his mom was still out ("I love you Izuku, make sure you eat. And don't spend all day on your computer!") and he was hungry, so best to relax for a bit. He only had one more article, a scholarly one at that, and he felt like he had a pretty good grasp on the three techniques of compliance.

He got to learn so many cool things with Nedzu! All the psychology and neuroscience things were so interesting, way cooler than the regular math and english and literature he usually did in school.

He made himself a simple sandwich, not wanting to bother with cooking quite yet, and sat by a window to eat it, opening it and letting the fresh air wash over him.
~~~~~

When he was done eating, he sat in front of the window for a bit more, just breathing in the air, until he was suddenly overtaken by a feeling of not enough, and a desire to do more. That sent him running for the door, pulling on his red shoes before locking it behind him, slipping the key back in it's hiding spot, taped to the side of the door, the side away from the stairs.

He bounded down the stairs, gleefully running to the park across the street with a giggle.

No one else was out at this time, regular school still in session for quite a while by his estimates, so he definitely had the park all to himself from other children, except the really young ones who didn't go to school yet.

Any of his neighbors had already been told by a gushing Inko that he was getting homeschooled, so no one questioned why he was out and not in school, simply sending him smiles and going back to their jogging, minding kids, reading, or whatever else it was they were doing in the park on this genuinely beautiful day.

It was his favorite type of weather, he thought as he ran around, climbing trees and sliding down the slide, with the warm glow of the sun and a gentle breeze. It was the perfect temperature for being outside, and Izuku was loving it.

After who knows how long, he flopped onto the grass to watch the puffy white clouds drift by.

He was so relaxed he didn't even notice when he slept into an easy sleep.

It really was the perfect day.

~~~~~

He woke with a start, body instantly rigid and heart pounding for reasons unknown. What had woken him up in such a state? He didn't remember any dreams…

"DEKU!"

Ah, he thought to the pop of explosions, that was why.

He scrambled to his feet as the blond approached with a brown haired girl chasing after him, looking a little mad, but Kacchan ignored her completely. School must have let out while he was napping; he had really wanted to avoid Kacchan if at all possible…

"SHITTY DEKU! WHERE THE FUCK HAVE YOU BEEN?"

He winced at the swears coming out of an eight year old's mouth. "U-um, in general, or…?"

Kacchan stopped a few feet from him, popping off explosions threateningly. "The hag says you're homeschooled now, some private tutor or some shit, but we both know that's bullshit, no way someone as useless like you caught the eye of a private tutor!"

Just then, the girl caught up. "Oh my god, Explodey, learn to chill!" She stood straighter and the annoyance slipped off her face as she turned to Izuku with a bright smile. "Hi there! I'm Uraraka Ochako, what's your name?"
~~~~~

Kacchan clicked his tongue. “Fuck off, Round Cheeks, we’re having a conversation.”

She rolled her eyes. “Yeah, and I want to be introduced to the green kid, now can you butt out?”

She turned back to Izuku, smiling expectantly.

He opened his mouth to reply but Kacchan sneered. “Didn’t you hear me? This is *Deku* . He’s quirkless.”

He wilted, looking away from the girl.

“Oh, neat, don’t see many of those. Nice to meet you, Deku!”

Izuku blinked, startled, but saw no malice on her face, just a toothy grin. She was missing one of her two front teeth, he noted idly.

Kacchan rolled his eyes. “Whatever, you’ve been introduced, back to the *important* conversation, why the fuck aren’t you in school? Round Cheeks took your spot so I know you’re not coming back.”

He blinked at Uraraka. She had taken his spot? Oh, she must be new then. A transfer? Living in a new place can always be hard, he hoped she was adjusting well…

He cleared his throat, knowing Kacchan wouldn’t like to be kept

waiting.

“U-um, no, that, that’s right, I’m… I’m being homeschooled.”

“By fucking who?”

Izuku was reluctant to tell the truth. Sure, it was the truth, and it was a really cool truth at that, but the chances of him being believed were slim and Kacchan didn’t like it when he thought Izuku was lying and then he’d come home with burns and bruises.

“Kacchan…”

“How many times do I have to tell you, don’t fucking call me that!”

He blinked. “...Then what should I call you?”

Kacchan stopped and scowled, thinking.

Izuku pressed on. “Should I call you Katsuki, since we’ve known each other for so long? Or maybe Bakugo, since you don’t like me?”

Kacchan grimaced. “Do *not* call me Bakugo, god, it sounds weird hearing that in your whiny voice.”

“...So, Katsuki then?”

He grimaced more. “No, that also sounds wrong. Fuck.” He clenched his teeth, clearly lost in thought, before sighing and scowling. “Fuck! Fine, just call me Kacchan, you useless nerd.”

Izuku blinked in surprise. “Are you sure?”

“Yes! I wouldn’t have said it if I wasn’t!”

“Ok then… Kacchan.”

The blond didn’t explode like he usually did, and Izuku relaxed minutely.

“Wow,” the girl chuckled, “you really tamed the beast, huh? He *wants* you to call him by that cutesy nickname!”

“I DIDN’T WANT SHIT, I’VE JUST HEARD IT FOR SO LONG ANYTHING ELSE SOUNDS WRONG! SHUT THE FUCK UP, ROUND CHEEKS!”

She merely giggled and danced out of the way of his explosions, leaving Izuku staring in awe. She was so confident. If anyone had tamed the beast, it definitely wasn’t Izuku.

He blinked.

Wait, what time was it?

“Um, how long ago did school let out…?”

Uraraka turned back, ducking under a swipe. “Not too long, maybe five minutes ago? We came right here. Why?”

He blanched. “Oh no, I’m going to be late! It was nice meeting you, Uraraka!”

She giggled. “You too, Deku! Maybe we can play outside again another time!”

Kacchan growled and yelled, but Izuku was already running.

She seemed nice.

~~~~~

He was, in fact, a little bit late, but when he told Nedzu about what had happened at the park and possibly making a friend, he was more than understanding.

[REDACTED]: I see today’s lesson is already sticking!

Greenbean: what do you mean?

[REDACTED]: ah, did you not know?

[REDACTED]: you used the door in the face technique

[REDACTED]: you presented him with undesirable options until he had no choice but to accept the nickname he had previously despised!
~~~~~

[REDACTED]: it wasn't a perfect representation, of course, but it was masterfully done.

[REDACTED]: he did end up complying, did he not?

Greenbean: oh, I guess you're right

Greenbean: huh

Greenbean: oh! Also, um, I'm sorry, but I haven't read the last link yet, I took a break and ended up napping outside before Kacchan found me

[REDACTED]: quite alright, that was merely a comparison essay with some experiments detailed within.

[REDACTED]: as long as you understand the topic, I see no reason why you would have to read it

[REDACTED]: besides, it is very small text, and not very interesting besides :)

Greenbean: are you sure?

[REDACTED]: quite! Now, I must apologize for this, but I'm afraid several of your plants are about to burn up

Greenbean: nooooo, not the asteroid :(

Greenbean: I will have my revenge!!!

[REDACTED]: I'm looking forward to it :)

~~~~~

The next week wasn't as eventful as that one day in the park.

The weather was still nice, so he did spend his lunch breaks there, but he was careful not to linger too long, not wanting to get caught by Kacchan, or even Uraraka, no matter how nice she had seemed.
~~~~~

He was at the store with his mother on Saturday, a day they both had off (except for scheduled gaming time, of course), so they liked to shop together, getting in all the time together that they could.

Their relationship had greatly improved since Izuku had started working with Nedzu a few weeks ago. She had always treated him a little like a porcelain doll, but now, with his new confidence, she was finally treating him more like just another little boy. He was capable, and she knew that now, it had been practically shoved in her face with the actual principal of UA, the smartest mammal in the area, coming and proclaiming it. Plus, she no longer had to worry about him getting bullied at school, since he was getting tutored on UA grounds, and there was no way Nedzu was going to let anything happen to his student.

It would probably be grounds for instant expulsion, what with how fond he was of the boy.

Still, the weekly grocery runs were something they both looked forward to, a nice way to conclude an otherwise busy week of work and school.

“Hmm,” she hummed to herself, “maybe we should buy a watermelon…”

“Actually,” he perked up, “that’s probably the priming talking! I noticed a sign for watermelon at the front of the store, so it was recently in your mind. Did you have watermelon on the list?”

She blinked, checking the paper before chuckling and ruffling his hair. “No, we don’t. But still, even if I’m being primed, tomorrow is supposed to be really warm, perfect for a watermelon treat. What do

you say, Izuku?"

He tilted his head, looking very serious as he considered, and his mother couldn't help but laugh quietly to herself.

He came to a decision and smiled brightly at her. "Ok!"

"Oh hey! It's Deku!"

His head shot up with a slight flinch, but the voice was feminine, so he was able to relax. He took in pink cheeks and brown hair before he smiled and waved shyly.

"Hi, Uraraka."

A man and a woman came up behind the beaming girl and the man chortled heartily. "Ochako, is this your new friend? The loud explosive one?"

She snorted. "No way! This is Deku! I met him in the park the other day! But he is friends with Explodey, I think."

Inko blinked and broke into a smile herself. "Izuku, is this the girl you were telling me about? Oh," she cooed, and he could feel himself getting red, "he was talking so much about how cool she was, handling Katsuki the way she did! The Uraraka's, was it?"

The woman smiled genially, extending a hand to shake. "Hello, yes, we're the Uraraka's. Our daughter, Ochako, recently joined the local

elementary school. Are they classmates?"

"Oh no," Inko shook her head, "he's homeschooled. He was in the park the other day when school let out, and that's how they met. I'm Midoriya Inko, it's nice to meet you."

As the adults talked, Uraraka came up to him with a frown. "Is your name not really Deku," she whispered, "because I noticed your mom called you Izuku."

"Y-yeah," he squeaked out, "it's another reading of my name, it means useless. Kacchan came up with it…" He trailed off, looking away, embarrassed.

Her face puffed up in indignation. "Now that's just mean! Sorry for calling you that earlier then, I didn't know what it meant."

"No no," he shook his hands rapidly, "it's not your fault! I didn't officially introduce myself the other day, even though you're totally new to the area and just moved here."

She cocked her head. "Oh, how'd you guess? I didn't think it came up…"

Crap, that's right, she hadn't.

"Oh, um," his heart was beating rapidly in his nervousness, "I just guessed? School only started recently, sure, but Kacchan said you took my spot, so you were either a transfer from another class or you had just moved here. I figured that Aldera is a pretty small school, and if you hadn't already heard of me or Kacchan, it was probably the

latter…"

She blinked, then smiled again. "Oh, yeah, that makes sense! You're pretty smart, Midori!"

He flushed at the nickname and she looked panicked. "Oh, um, sorry, I just didn't know what to call you. Midoriya is weird because your mom is here, and I'm not gonna call you Deku. Plus, I don't think we're familiar enough for me to call you Izuku, ya know?"

He nodded in starts, still trying to comprehend that a girl and his maybe friend had given him a nickname, one that wasn't even hurtful!

"Plus," she giggled, "you *are* rather green."

That drew the adults back into the conversation, all of them laughing. Inko put a hand to her face, smiling at him.

"Yes, I'm afraid Izuku got my coloration in all respects, but he did get his father's curls, so I don't have *quite* a carbon copy."

Uraraka's mom laughed. "You do look remarkably similar, no one will doubt he's your son, Inko."

The short woman hemmed and hawed for a moment before her face brightened. "Oh! You folks just moved in, right? Why don't you come over for dinner tomorrow, I would love to get to know you, impart my wisdom of the area. Plus, Izuku would no doubt love to have Ochako over, isn't that right, son?"

He blinked, glancing at the girl. Then he beamed. “Yeah! If, um, that is, if you want to?”

Uraraka bounded back to her parents with wide eyes. “Please? Explodey probably isn't going to invite me over any time soon, and I have no other friends yet!”

They quickly agreed, chuckling all around, before Inko gave them the address and the time and they all peeled off to do their own shopping.

“Izuku,” his mom said as they approached the produce section, “let’s pick up two watermelons!”

He sighed good naturedly and put two watermelons in the cart.

“Drawn in by the priming, mom!”

She just laughed, and he couldn’t help but giggle too.

Chapter End Notes

I came to the realization that the Afo/All Might fight is sometime during this year so with the help of my girlfriend I made a plan, see you guys with it next chapter lmao

also raka is cute as hell and you can fight me on this, she is absolutely eventually gonna throw hands with explodey boy

All Might Dies, Sorry

Chapter Summary

He's in the hospital, at least. The AfO/All Might fight happens during this year, so we have the aftermath, Izuku being a manipulative little shit without realizing it, and then a game with more of the teachers!

Chapter Notes

the game that happens actually happened in real life with my discord group! For the first two, at the very least, all responses are completely legit, each person was assigned a character and I embellished a little, lol. The last one got more complicated, especially towards the end, but the rats from the server should be able to recognize themselves still

(so if you think people are out of character, you get to blame the rats)

(also if you're wondering why I was gone for almost a week and then have posted two chapters of each story in like, 3 days, it's because I'm helping take care of a two and four year old and that shit takes up a lot of time, so I write when they're gone, napping, and/or I'm not exhausted)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Nedzu was nervous, Izuku could tell.

Well, it wasn't really nerves? It was more like…

Hmm, it was hard to tell.

If Izuku had to put a label on it, it was a mix of flustered, angry, annoyed, upset, and a little bit of exasperation thrown in for good measure.

No one else would probably be able to tell, but Izuku had been having lessons with Nedzu for almost two months now, and he had a pretty good handle on the various emotions of his friend. Plus, Nedzu had wanted him to focus on observation, now that he had a lot of manipulation tactics and psychology tricks down, so he would be able to accurately figure out which ones would work best! Because of that, he had really gotten much better at reading people, including Nedzu.

He just didn't know why Nedzu was feeling all those things, but, well, if you want to know something, you can either do some digging, or be direct.

"Nedzu?"

"Yes, Izuku?"

"Why are you… upset?"

The principal blinked before smiling. "Ah, forgive me, I didn't mean to have it interfere with our lessons…"

"No, it's not," he shook his head, "I was just concerned is all."

Nedzu blinked. "Concerned? For me?"

He shifted, suddenly nervous. "Well, y-yeah, you are usually pretty cool - not to say that when you're upset you aren't cool! I meant, um, like, calm and collected? In control, I guess. But recently…"

Nedzu hummed. “There has been a case with the Commission and one of our top heroes that needs to be kept under wraps.”

“Oh,” he blinked rapidly, “of course, I won’t pry.”

“Oh no,” Nedzu chuckled, “that’s not what has me irritated, not in the slightest! I understand completely why they want to keep such a thing hidden, but…” He cocked his head, examining Izuku, before he seemed to come to a decision. “Well, maybe you can see for yourself!”

~~~~~

OK, all cards on the table, this was not what Izuku was expecting, honest.

Someone injured?

Sure, they were headed to a hospital anyway.

A hero injured?

It made sense, something the Commission would want to keep under wraps, especially if it was bad. Plus, they headed to the hero ward, so he wasn’t shocked to see a hero.

No, it was the *number one hero* who was injured.
~~~~~

In retrospect (a fun word he had learned recently), it made even more sense that the Commission would want to cover this up. All Might, Symbol of Peace, severely injured in a villain fight? Yeah, people would probably freak out, like it was the end of days or something. Crime would probably hike up, people would become petty criminals, there might even be something like looting in the streets, and that was with All Might winning!

In fact, they didn't even make it to the room. All Might was busy using the wall to get himself to walk down the hallway and out of his hospital bed, while Sir Nighteye pleaded with him to go back to bed. Izuku was so shocked he actually stopped, making Nedzu tug at his hand where he held it, not expecting the stop.

He didn't stop the boy when his hand slipped out and he rushed forward, both mad and concerned.

"Hey! You're really hurt! Get back in bed!"

The two pros blinked at Izuku, not quite seeing Nedzu yet, before All Might spoke up.

"I can assure you, young man, I'm perfectly-"

"Toshinori, stop, even a *child* can see how injured you are! At this rate, you'll finish what that man started!"

All Might huffed. "Mirai, I can't just stop being a hero! The world needs me!"

Izuku folded his arms, annoyed at being ignored. “The world can need you when you’re fully healed, now get back in bed. Or do I need to call a doctor?”

The Symbol of Peace paled (and wasn’t that a sight) and sputtered. “Young man-”

“Izuku.”

“-Young Izuku, I will be just fine, there is nothing the hospital can do to help me-”

“Why not?”

He blinked, looking down at this eight year old green child who was stubbornly crossing his arms and glaring, at him, Yagi Toshinori, the number one hero.

“Well,” he started, speaking as one would to a much younger child than Izuku, “I got really hurt, but most of the hurt ended up taking out some of my insides. That’s not something hospitals can just… fix.”

“What about prosthetics?”

“I… I don’t know if I can get a prosthetic lung.”

Izuku shrugged. “In the age of quirks, I’ve seen weirder things. Cloning definitely exists, so someone, somewhere, could probably build you a new one.”

“Well, yes, I suppose-”

“But if you want that to work you need to be ready and fit, as fit as you can be, so you need! To go! To bed!”

Gently pushing against him, carefully avoiding the bandages that were spotted with pink from no doubt opened stitches, Izuku herded a bewildered All Might back into his hospital room, Sir Nighteye trailing behind relieved and amused in equal measure. Nedzu crept in behind on silent feet, watching his student and friend bully the Symbol of Peace into resting.

When All Might noticed him, he did a double take and his eyes went comically wide.

“Ne-Nedzu! When did you get here?”

“Oh,” the mammal mused, “since Izuku has been. We came together, after all!”

Nighteye looked at the boy in a new light. “This is the student I’ve heard rumors of?”

Nedzu’s eyes sparkled. “Pray tell, who did you hear those rumors from?”

The tall man scoffed. “No, I’m not telling, I imagine you’d rather figure it out on your own.”

“Oho,” he chortled, “quite so! But yes, this is Midoriya Izuku, my personal student and friend!”

Both heroes blinked at that. It wasn’t often Nedzu called someone, least of all a human, his friend.

Said friend was still glaring at All Might (or more the sheets he was fiddling with) and carefully rearranging the bed to try and make him more comfortable, and thus, more likely to stay in bed.

“Young Izuku…”

He held up a hand to stop the hero. “No, unless it’s an apology for recklessly and pointlessly reopening your no doubt terrible wounds, I don’t wanna hear it. Honestly, what were you thinking? You thought you could save people in this state?”

His anger turned to sadness and he sniffed, eyes watering. “How can you save everyone with a smile if you make your friends worry?”

Sir Nighteye nodded. “Toshinori, please, we just want you to stay safe…”

Izuku looked into All Might’s blue eyes, trying to morph his expression into one of determination instead of misery.

“How can you save anyone if you don’t even save yourself?”

Yagi Toshinori, Symbol of Peace, number one hero, All Might, and eighth successor of One for All, broke, right then and there.

(And then again when Chiyo came and hit him for getting out of bed).

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Not five minutes later, Izuku was all smiles, though his eyes were still a little red and he did sniff occasionally, while he jabbered on to the bedridden All Might about physical therapy, food that was light on your stomach and still good for you, bedtime stories that never failed to help Izuku sleep, and so on, everything and nothing.

Sir Nighteye pulled Nedzu aside, speaking quietly.

“What on earth possessed you to bring a child here?”

Nedzu smiled. “I’m not sure what you mean, we just happened to be in the ward when he saw a clearly injured person trying to resist medical help!”

“Don’t try it, Nedzu, you brought him here on purpose.”

He hummed, looking at the sparkle in Izuku’s eyes. “I did, you are correct. Izuku noticed my change in mood and wanted to know what was causing it.”

Nighteye raised an eyebrow. “So why bring him? Why not just say someone got in an accident?”
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“Oh, but I did! However, that wasn’t what irritated me. It was the fact that Yagi was making poor decisions and was not willing to listen to reason!”

“That doesn’t answer the question. Why did you bring the boy here?”

Nedzu gestured to the pair. “What do you think? He is very good at what he does, no? And I don’t even think he knew what he was doing, isn’t it wonderful?”

Nighteye paused before frowning. “You brought him… to manipulate Toshinori into actually getting rest?”

“Oh yes. If he starts acting up again, I’m sure we can stop by. Izuku would no doubt love to make sure he is taking all the suggestions to heart, the boy has done plenty of research on the human body. Mostly the psyche, you understand, but biology is important too!”

“…How old is he?”

“He’s eight.”

“And he got an accurate read on your emotions?”

“We spend a lot of time together, but yes, he did get much better at observation faster than I could have possibly hoped.”

Nighteye nodded, contemplative. “He’s a good child.”

“Indeed! Coming from you, who hates children, that is a high compliment!”

Nighteye rolled his eyes. “Coming from you, who hates most humans, it is also a compliment to call him your friend.”

Nedzu quieted down, smile fading to a more normal, softer expression.

“Yes, I suppose it is.”

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After making the bedridden hero promise to stay bedridden, the two left again, heading back to UA in much brighter spirits.

“Izuku,” Nedzu said as they walked through the gates, “would you like to play a game today?”

Izuku perked up. “What game?”

“Ah, there’s a game called Insider, it's a bit like 20 questions, or Person Place or Thing, but there is one person who secretly knows what the word is as well! Are you interested?”

Another game of secrets? Of course, count him in.
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“Yes please!”

“Excellent, I’ll just gather some of the staff then. Shall we see who’s free?”

They walked into the staff room and Midnight paled at the sight of them both. Aizawa sighed and buried his face deeper in his capture scarf, Ectoplasm looked resigned, and Present Mic looked delighted.

“Hey there, listener! You must be Izuku! Surprised I haven’t seen you yet, since you’ve been here so long! I’m Present Mic, but you can call me Yamada!”

Izuku nodded, eyes sparkling. “I really like your radio show!”

“Ey, put ya hands up for a high five, little listener!”

Izuku giggled and obliged, high fiving the Voice Hero.

“Anyway, what’s up, Nedzu?”

“Ah! We’re here to play a game and were wondering if you’d like to join us!”

Aizawa and Ectoplasm, frequent victims, just sighed and went to sit at the table, already resigned to their fate. Midnight was a little more nervous, especially seeing the reaction of the other two, but Yamada

looked thrilled.

“Sure thing, what’re we playin?”

Nedzu hopped up into a seat, Izuku beside him, and slid a small red box with an eye decal on it onto the table.

“Tell me, you all have played 20 Questions, or Person Place or Thing before, correct?”

There were nods all around.

“Excellent! This game is not much different, just a little more nuanced! These tokens,” and he slid out six rectangles with a black and white design on the back, “represent our roles. There is the Master, the Commoners, and of course, the Insider, hence the name of the game. The only other thing in this box you’ll see is this deck of cards. On one side is a number, one through six, and on the other, six numbered nouns! When the roles are passed out, the Master will reveal themselves, everyone else staying quiet about who or what they are. Everyone closes their eyes, the master flips a card over to reveal a new number and a list of words. The number on the back of the next card is which word on the card you flipped that everyone will have to guess. Once the Master knows it, they close their eyes as well and call for the Insider to open their eyes as well. The Insider has a few moments to acquaint themselves with the word before the Master will tell them to close their eyes again and will flip the card back over, so that no one can see. Everyone will open their eyes, a timer of five minutes will start, and we will go around the circle asking the Master yes or no questions to try and determine what the object is. The Insider wants the group to guess it, but does not want to be discovered, so they must be careful about asking questions that are too pointed. Does anyone have any questions?”

Aizawa sighed. “When are we allowed to guess? Does that count as a question?”

“Yes, it is generally counted as a question, but at two minutes remaining it is considered a free for all and anyone can ask questions completely out of order.”

Izuku nodded. “What if the answer to a question is maybe?”

Nedzu’s whiskers twitched. “Up to the discretion of the Master, I suppose. In general, stick to one side, if one maybe is a no, then all maybes should also be no.”

Midnight slapped her hands on the table, looking excited. “This sounds fun, let’s play!”

Nedzu spread the tokens in the center of the table, allowing everyone to pick them before him, going last, and Aizawa flipped his up.

“I’m the Master.”

Nedzu flipped over a tiny hourglass and indicated to Izuku. “You are to his left, you ask the first question.”

He nodded. “Um, is it alive?”

“No.”

Nedzu went next. “Is it a place?”

“Yes.”

Midnight put her chin in her hand. “Is it kid-friendly,” she purred.

Aizawa looked at her, deadpan.

“Yes.”

Ectoplasm nodded. “Is it well known?”

“Yes.”

Present Mic tapped his fingers on the table. “Oh, I know, is it the park?”

“No, why are you guessing this early.”

“Phooey.”

Izuku swallowed, his turn again. “Is it… an amusement park?”

Aizawa sighed, turning his dead gaze to him. “It… it can be.”

Midnight perked up. “Woah, is that allowed? That wasn’t a yes or a no!”

Nedzu smiled. “Perfectly so. Is it open for seven to ten hours?”

“Yes.”

Midnight huffed. “Is there an age limit?”

“No.”

Ectoplasm clicked his teeth in thought. “Is it a water park?”

“No.”

“Is it an ice cream parlor?”

“Mic, ask questions, not guesses, and no.”

“Is it… oh, wait, does this place serve food?”

Aizawa sighed at Izuku’s question, though it was more relieved. “Yes.”

Nedzu hummed. “Does this place have multiple stores?”

“Yes.”

“Does it sell… adult things~?”

“I hate you, there is literally an eight year old here. Also yes.”

Midnight trying to hold back her laughter but she couldn’t help it and some snorts escaped.

“Hmm,” Ectoplasm pondered, “I feel like we’re close. Oh, does it usually have one big clothes store?”

Nedzu piped up, unable to help himself. “Is it a mall?”

Aizawa sighed. “Are you sure it was in the free for all section, Nedzu? But yes, the word was mall.”

“Oh yes. Forgive me, Ectoplasm, I couldn’t help myself!”

Ectoplasm shrugged. “I was getting there, but it’s no big deal.”

“Now,” Nedzu clapped his hands together, “comes the fun part! First, since I guessed the word, do you all think *I* am the Insider? And AIzawa gets to guess as well, of course, since he doesn’t know the identity either.”

Yamada hummed. “I dunno, you asked some pretty pointed questions. He was the one who guessed it was a place, and that it had multiple stores.”

Midnight sighed. “Yeah, but he’s also Nedzu. I think it’s Ecto or Izuku.”

He blinked. “Why me?”

“Just the vibes, you know?”

Nedzu chuckled. “Well, it’s time to vote on whether or not I am the Insider. Hands out, make a thumbs up or thumbs down on the count of three…”

On three, most thumbs were pointed down, with the exception of Aizawa, who was looking at the principal with narrowed eyes.

Nedzu chortled. “Well, I was not the Insider, so you were correct in this matter, most of you. Now, we have to guess who we think the Insider actually is! If we guess incorrectly, the Insider wins and everyone else loses. I believe we have discussed our thoughts enough, on the count of three, point to who you think it is!”

Midnight pointed at Izuku, Yamada pointed at Ectoplasm, and everyone else pointed at Yamada.

He pouted. “What? No way, I was way off base all the time!”

“Yes,” Aizawa drawled, “which is suspicious.”

“Well,” Nedzu said with glee, “were you the Insider?”

Yamada flipped up his token, revealing he was a Commoner. “Nope!”

Nedzu blinked. “How curious, who was it?”

Midnight grinned. “Me! I didn’t have to do much, Nedzu asked most of the hard questions. But Shouta, what mall is also an amusement park?”

“The big ones, like Mall of America. I don’t know, I don’t like to go to malls, too many people.”

Midnight rolled her eyes and bounced excitedly. “Ok, are we playing again?”

Nedzu took up the six tokens and shuffled them, Aizawa and Midnight picking last.

Aizawa flipped up the Master token again.

Midnight and Yamada groaned. “There’s no way that’s fair!”

Midnight nodded, slamming her hands into the table. “This is rigged!”

“I picked last, don’t be ridiculous.”

Nedzu chuckled. “Very well, time to close our eyes so the Master can see the word!”

Izuku closed his eyes, a little bummed he wasn’t anything special this round either, but he was having fun, so there was that.

“Now the Master closes their eyes and the Insider opens theirs!”

After another moment, everyone opened their eyes, the card carefully tucked under Aizawa’s token, and Nedzu flipped the timer again.

“Izuku, you start again!”

He gulped. Well, tried and true. “Is it alive?”

Aizawa actually grimaced. “No.”

Seemingly in the same vein of thinking, Nedzu asked, “Is it a place?”

“No.”

“Is it,” Midnight paused for dramatic effect, “robotic?”

Aizawa sighed. “No.”

“Can you eat it?”

“...No.”

Yamada grinned. “Can it cause harm?”

“Zashi, everything can cause harm if used incorrectly enough.”

“Yeah I meant if used correctly, is it usually used to harm people?”

“No.”

Izuku bit his lip. “Is it an object?”

“Yes, finally, a good question.”

“Hmm, is it consumable?”

“No.”

Midnight leaned forward. “Is it thicc, with three c’s?”

Aizawa took a deep sigh, looking like he longed to be anywhere else.

“No.”

Ectoplasm had taken to ignoring Midnight, it seemed, because he wasn’t phased in the slightest.

“Can you hold it easily?”

“Yes.”

Yamada went next. “Is it bigger than an average housecat?”

“Yes, generally.”

Back to Izuku.

“Is it a toy?”

“No.”

Nedzu smiled. “Can it be used for daily needs?”

“Yes.”

“Is it a blanket?”

“No.”

“Is it a purse?”

“One, bigger than an average housecat, two, stop guessing things, Ectoplasm I expected better.”

“Is it a bed?”

“Zashi, what did I just say? And no.”

“Is it something on a bed?”

“No.”

Nedzu hummed again. “We’ve passed the two minute warning if you all would simply like to ask questions.”

“Is it a phone?”

“Nemuri I swear to god I will kick your ass into next week if you guess another thing without getting more information.”

“Fine, can I use it to restrain someone?”

“Nedzu, remind me why you let her in this game?”

“Sho, answer the question.”

“You know what? Fine. Yes.”

Midnight blinked and broke into a grin. “Really? Awesome!”

Yamada sat up straight. “Is it kept in a specific place?”

“Yes.”

“Is it… made of metal?”

“No, Izuku, it’s not.”

Nedzu raised a paw. “Can things be stored in this item?”

Aizawa narrowed his eyes. “Yes.”

Midnight and Yamada did a rapid fire guessing round.

“Cardboard box?”

“Backpack?”

“Briefcase?”

They kept firing off various containers, only for all of them to be shot down (“Zashi I swear, a wallet is smaller than a cat.” “Not a kitten!” “Kill me now.”).

“Wait,” Izuku muttered, “can it be made of different materials?”

Aizawa grinned. “Yes, it can.”

“Can it be rectangular in shape?”

“Yes.”

Midnight chewed her lip before shooting up. “Oh! Is it a basket!”

Aizawa ran a hand through his hair. “Yes, god, finally.”

Nedzu clapped his hands in delight. “Lovely! Now we have to ask if Midnight is in fact our Insider, since she was the one to guess it!”

She frowned. “But I was the Insider last time?”

“And I was the Master, and yet. But no, I don’t think it’s her, or she’s really bad at her job.”

Izuku nodded. “I don’t think she’s the Insider either.”

Ectoplasm and Nedzu also shook their heads.

At the vote, everyone voted no.

“Nemuri, were you the Insider?”

She flipped up her token. “Nope, not this time. I think it was Hizashi.”

The man gasped in shock. “Again? What did I do to deserve this? I can’t believe you!”

Nedzu’s snout twitched in amusement. “Personally, I believe it to be Izuku!”

His eyes widened. “W-what? Why?”

“You were the one who asked the two questions that lead Midnight to guessing correctly, it seems logical to me.”

Yamada folded his arms. “I think it was Ecto.”

“Nah, it probably is Yamada this time.”

They voted, Yamada getting most of the votes, with Nedzu voting for Izuku and Yamada himself voting for Ectoplasm.

“Alas,” he bemoaned, falling back with his hand to his forward, “twas not I! I was merely a commoner!”

Midnight harrumphed. “No way! Then who was it?”

Ectoplasm raised a hand. “It was me.”

Most of the table groaned, with the exception of Nedzu, who chuckled.

Aizawa tossed his Master token into the center of the table. “I hope I don’t get that again because all of you are hopeless.”

They dealt out the tokens one last time, and Izuku was delighted to see he was the Master. He flipped it up with a grin.

“Excellent,” Nedzu said, “now we should all close our eyes!”

They went through the process again, and the card flipped up to reveal the word was wife.

This should be good.

Nedzu, to Izuku's left, started them off, eyes twinkling as he stole Izuku's usual starting question.

"Is it alive?"

"Yes."

Midnight hummed. "Is this alive thing a person?"

"Yes."

"Is it female?"

"Yes."

Yamada grinned. "A mother?"

"No."

Aizawa narrowed his eyes. "A sister?"

"No."

"Is this person in the 5' to 5'5 range?"

Izuku blinked. “Um, they can be?”

Midnight plopped her chin in her hand. “Are they older than ten?”

Izuku paled. “ *Yes* .”

Ectoplasm nodded. “Does she like teeth?”

They all turned to face the cloning hero.

“What? I mean like, does she collect teeth?”

“…No.”

“Damn, then not the tooth fairy.”

Yamada slammed his hands on the table. “Is it a familial role?”

“Yes.”

Aizawa nodded. “Daughter?”

“No.”

“Niece?”

“No.”

“Parent?”

“She… can be?”

Midnight sighed dramatically and Ectoplasm took the next question.

“Is she in love?”

Izuku blushed. “I, I hope so?”

Yamada perked up. “Is she a bride?”

“Um, no.”

Midnight slammed her hands on the table. “Is she a wife?”

Izuku blushed again and nodded. “Yeah, the word was wife.”

Yamada grinned. “That makes a lot of sense! I was really close with mother, damn, but I guess not all mothers are wives and not all wives

are mothers!"

"Quite so," Nedzu hummed, "now, do we believe Midnight to be the Insider?"

There was a chorus of no's, the vote revealing the same.

"Very well, Midnight?"

"Nope, not me. I think that this time, it really is Hizashi!"

Yamada groaned. "Nem, stop, it hasn't been me the past two times, no matter how much you thought it was! Give it a rest!"

"Well, *eventually* ," the woman crowed, "I'm bound to be right!"

Izuku spoke up. "I think it might be Ectoplasm again, the tooth fairy thing might have been meant to throw us off."

Aizawa scratched his chin. "I don't know, the only people we know for sure it's not are Izuku and Nemuri. Other than that, everyone is fair game."

After a bit more deliberation, they voted, two fingers pointing to Ectoplasm, three fingers pointing to Yamada, and one finger pointing to Nedzu.

"Oh," his mentor asked, "you suspect me, Izuku?"

He nodded hesitantly.

“Well, the majority went with Yamada, so I do believe it is time to reveal!”

Yamada flipped his token up, revealing a commoner for the third time in a row, and the whole table groaned, except Nedzu who cackled, revealing he was the Insider.

“Well,” he stood up from the table, gathering the tokens and cards and hourglass back into the small box, “despite never successfully capturing the Insider in all three rounds played, I rather enjoyed myself! Thank you for playing, my teachers, but now Izuku and I must go. Toodles.”

They walked out the room leaving confused teachers behind and as soon as the door to Nedzu’s office shut, Izuku burst out laughing.

“Toodles?! Since when do you say toodles?”

Nedzu chuffed lightly. “Since I decided to confuse my subordinates! They certainly looked it, so I gather I succeeded!”

He giggled. “Yeah, you did. They looked really shocked.”

Nedzu hummed in delight. “Now, what would you like to do for the remainder of our time left?”

Izuku perked up. “Can we play Six again? I want to beat you again!”

Nedzu smiled coyly, clearing a space on his desk and drawing out a deck of cards. “Bold words, Izuku. Can you live up to them?”

Izuku hummed, pretending to be in thought. “I dunno, you might be right; after all, you *are* Nedzu!”

Nedzu chuckled. “And you, my friend, are Izuku! Now, I will deal first…”

Chapter End Notes

> As the rats will tell you, it was a really fun game. I was the master each time, rolling a die and using a random noun generator to simulate the game and dming the insider the word
>
> the rats were terrible at the game, honestly, but we all had a lot of fun lmao

A Love Letter to the Princess

Chapter Summary

another adventure at the park, and a talk and game with Yagi and Nighteye

Chapter Notes

many thanks to my lovely beta, Lady of the Lion!

(edited 3/26 to make the rules of Love Letter easier to read lol)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The next time Ochako saw Midori, after the fun dinner, was in the park again, on a Saturday.

Explodey was there too.

Her eyes widened at the explosions coming from his palms and the green boy clearly running in fear and she quickly whipped off her jacket, tying the arms together before running up to her classmate, wrapping it around him, and then floating him off the ground.

“Round Cheeks, what the fuck?!”

“You lost ground privileges!”

Midori slowed to stop and blinked at her, taking in her quirk with wide eyes. He rushed up to her, and she blinked when he began to talk.

“Oh my gosh, is that your quirk? Touch based? Some sort of gravity

negation, it looks like, since he's floating and you had to tie something to him so he wouldn't float off…"

Explodey twisted and writhed in the air to no avail, not even able to grab onto the jacket to lower himself down. "Let me go, you bitch!"

She frowned up at him. "No way! You were trying to hurt Midori, and that's not cool!"

He sneered. "Deku's fucking useless, whe would you defend him?"

Her eyes blazed in indignation. "He's not useless just because he's quirkless, and if you're picking on him for that, then you're being a villain!"

Bakugo blinked at her. Midori blinked at her. She blinked back at them.

"Oh, and yeah, it's called Zero Gravity. You're really smart, Midori!"

He was shaken out of his stupor by her compliments and he flushed, sputtering and shaking his hands, just like that day in the supermarket. She gave him a toothy grin and giggled.

"I'm… I'm not a villain."

He was uncharacteristically quiet, but his eyes were blazing with determination. She raised her eyebrows in disbelief.

“If I let you down, will you attack Midori?”

“...No.”

She nodded once and handed the jacket off to Midori before tapping her fingers together. “Release!”

Midori’s eyes were sparkling as she untied her jacket from the more solemn blond and shrugged it back on. He was bouncing up and down, sending not so subtle glances at her hands, and she extended them with a giggle.

He went off on a mutter storm and she couldn’t hear a word he was saying as he traced her finger pads and squished her hand.

He cut himself off sheepishly. “Sorry, that was probably creepy…”

“Nope!” She shook her head. “It was flattering you think something this simple is cool!”

He nodded, eyes sharp. “You could be a great rescue hero, if you wanted! You could negate the weight of debris, or make it easier to carry an injured person, or, if you can float yourself, you could use something like a jetpack or a grappling hook to have increased mobility and get places really fast! Heck, if you had Kacchan, he could just blast you to where you needed to go! If he was weightless, he could fly through the air faster than before.” He whirled to the quiet explosive boy and immediately continued his assault. “Kacchan, you’ve been looking for aerial help, right? Uraraka could help you with that, since she could just make you like a kite and then you practice being in the air! Then maybe later, you won’t need her, but

that would probably be good quirk practice for her too…"

He trailed off, looking down and muttering to himself and she giggled again, nudging the shell shocked blond. "Pretty crazy how he went from terrified of you to offering you tips. He must think a lot of you." Her expression fell and steely determination took over. "But if I find you hurting him again, I really will make you a kite, and then I might forget to let you down. Got it?"

Red eyes met her and the boy gulped, nodding. "Got it," he managed to scratch out.

She grinned again. "Good! Now, Midori, you wanna play with us on the playground?"

Green eyes met hers and the boy grinned. "Yeah!"

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The next day was their now weekly visit to All Might. Oh yes, Izuku had known immediately who it was upon seeing the man, injury or no. He was a big fan, and could probably pick the real All Might out of a crowd of lookalikes no sweat. Did he freak out about bullying the symbol of peace a little? Yes, but only after the fact, and he was far more glad the number one hero was going to be taking care of himself.

He sat with the bedridden hero while Nedzu and Nighteye chatted about things, probably cases.

He cocked his head when there was a lull in conversation. "I know
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the commission wants to keep the fight you had a secret, but I did some digging-"

"Young Izuku," he flustered, "please, you are a young child, you shouldn't be looking into this!"

Izuku blinked at him, then continued. "So, I did some digging, and I got some accounts; is it true the person you were facing had multiple quirks?"

All Might blustered, clearly not wanting to answer any of his questions, but after exchanging a tired glance with the other two heroes in the room and getting nothing more than unsympathetic glances and an eerie smile, he was getting no help from them, and Izuku just kept prodding.

"...Yes, he did."

"That makes sense. Well, it doesn't, since people generally only have one quirk, but you're really strong, so it would take someone with multiple quirks to injure you this much. Was it All for One?"

He flinched.

"Where did you hear that name?"

Izuku shrugged. "The internet. Like I said,I did some digging." He perked up, satisfied with the answers he had gotten and grinned at Nedzu. "We brought a game, didn't we?"

Nedzu smiled. “We did! Nighteye, would you be willing to join us for a game?”

The foresight hero raised an eyebrow. “I suppose. What is it?”

Nedzu’s eyes twinkled. “Izuku, you’ve played once before, would you like to explain?”

He grinned. “Yes!”

He settled in next to All Might sliding the cards out of the cloth bag and leaving the little tokens inside. He passed out an information card to each of the heroes who hadn’t played before and then started lightly shuffling the deck.

“This game is called Love Letter! You’re trying to get your love letter to the princess to win her favor, and you have various cards you can do them with. Looking at your information card, I’ll go from the top down. The Princess is the best and highest card in the game, at a worth of nine, but you can never play or discard her, or you’re out and you automatically lose.

Next is the Countess, worth eight. Her special ability is that if you also have the King or one of the Princes, you must discard her, but it doesn’t make you lose, you just no longer have that high value card.

Next is the King, if you play him, you switch your hands with another player’s.

Next are the Chancellors, and from here there are multiples of each card, two unless I say otherwise. The Chancellor allows you to draw

two cards from the deck, keep one, and put your remaining two cards on the bottom of the deck in any order you'd like.

Next are the Princes, and playing him will force another player, including yourself if need be, to discard their current hand and redraw. For those of us who are keeping track, the King is worth seven, the Chancellor six, and the Prince five.

Next, at four, is the Handmaiden card. If you play her, until your next turn, any card that targets another player, like the King, the Prince, or the others we haven't gone over yet, those cards cannot be played on you and must target someone else.

At three is the Baron. You play him and pick another player and the two of you compare cards. Whoever has the lower point value loses and is out of the game, and they must discard their hand.

At two is the Priest, and playing him lets you look at another's person's hand.

At one are the Guards, and there are six of them. Playing them, you pick another player and guess what they have in their hand, with the exception of the guard. If you're right, they discard and are out. If you're wrong, nothing happens.

Last, at zero points, is the Spy. There are two Spy cards in the game, and if you are the only still active player alive at the end of the game with a Spy, you get a favor token regardless of whether or not you won the Princess's favor. Everyone starts with one card, and on their turn, draw another from the deck. There will also always be one card out of the game, so you don't totally know what's in and what isn't. Anyone have any questions?"

All Might blinked. “So, we want to have the highest card discarded?”

Izuku shook his head. “No, you want to have the highest card in hand. If you play or discard a high card, you should generally have a good reason for it, because whoever has the highest value at the end wins the favor of the Princess.”

Sir Nighteye nodded. “And, to clarify, if someone plays a Spy and is later taken out, they do not count for the Spy token?”

“Yep! You have to be alive, so to speak.”

Nedzu smiled widely. “Well then, since we all know what we’re doing, let us begin! The first to three tokens wins!”

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Playing a Baron was always a risky move, Izuku knew, but when you had the Countess, you really almost had no one that could beat you, and you didn’t want to play her if you didn’t have to, so Izuku felt confident when he used it on Sir Nighteye.

They slid their cards across the bed to each other, careful not to let anything show, and they both looked, blank faced. They silently passed them back and Izuku flipped up the Countess, eyes never leaving Nighteye’s.

“Ohoho,” Nedzu chuckled, laying down a Guard, “Nighteye, you wouldn’t happen to have the Princess, the only card higher than the Countess, would you?”
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Still staring at Izuku, dead silent, Nighteye revealed the card Izuku had already seen.

Nedzu won that round.

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Izuku bit his lip, looking at the cards that had already been played. It was between him and Nedzu, and he had the last draw.

The King.

The Countess had already been played, taken out by having a Prince in hand as well, much to All Might's dismay, so the only card that could beat him was the Princess. One card was out of the game, but the two cards he didn't have (other than the baron he had drawn and was not keen on using) were the Princess and a Guard.

He could use the Baron if Nedzu had the Guard, and then he would win.

Then again, if Nedzu had the Princess, he should use the King and swap their hands.

There was only one right answer, but Izuku didn't know what it was. He didn't have a Spy out, so he didn't gain anything from trying to preserve his life by risking the King, but Nedzu did.
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He had to take the risk.

“I’m Baroning you.”

“Are you sure, Izuku?”

“Yes.”

Since they were the only two left, and it was the last play anyway, they both flipped up their cards.

Izuku leapt to his feet, whooping, while Nedzu chuckled, handing over another favor token.

“Well done, Izuku,” he murmured, “well done.”

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He buzzed in anticipation while he drew his last card. All four of them were still in this round, but it had gotten very close. The two Barons had both ended in a tie, meaning no one died, and no one had successfully been Guarded, but Nighteye would be the last to draw and play and everyone was nervous.

Izuku especially, because he had the Princess and the two Spies besides, guaranteeing him a token if he lived.

He looked at the card he drew and he grinned, plopping it down
~~~~~

triumphantly.

“Handmaid!”

Nighteye cursed.

~~~~~

They ended up playing many more rounds than just whoever got to three tokens first, probably a total of five games, and they all did fairly well. It was part luck, after all, even if being able to weigh options and probability was equally important. The sun was setting by the time they put the game away, and Izuku lingered behind a little bit, looking at the injured hero with wide eyes.

“You’ve been keeping up with your physical therapy and diet, right?”

All Might smiled. “Yes, I have, thank you. I’m feeling better already.”

Izuku doubted that, with the two missing organs, but whatever, if the adults wanted to sugarcoat things, by all means.

When they were on the train, Nedzu plopped beside him, he hummed to himself.

“What’s on your mind, my friend?”

“The person who injured him. I was wondering what gave rise to a
~~~~~

person like that."

Nedzu looked delighted. "And what are your thoughts?"

Izuku hummed again, looking down at his hands. "I think… There's a lot of focus on quirks now. Someone with a powerful quirk basically has life handed to them. If he really was All for One, the boogeyman who could take and give quirks, then I think he's today's society's worst nightmare. And to someone like me, or with a quirk they don't want…" He looked out the window, squinting. "I think he'd be hope."

Nedzu didn't respond, letting him gather his thoughts.

"I don't think he'd do anything for free, though. Even if he looks appealing on paper, there's no way someone like that would just give someone like me a quirk, or exchange quirks with someone who didn't like theirs. There would always be a cost."

"Very insightful. How do you think we could get rid of him, if he were still a problem?"

Izuku thought for a moment. "I think we could only really get rid of him if we took away his power. And I don't mean his quirk, I mean, he preys on society. So we just have to change society."

Nedzu smiled to himself. "Quite right, Izuku! Perhaps we can look at ways to change society tomorrow!"

Izuku grinned at his friend. "Yeah!"

Chapter End Notes

baby's first steps into world domination~!

FT is gonna go up in a hot sec too, but anyway, yeah, welcome to world domination part one. I promised this was going to be a world domination fic but then it turned into a table top gaming fic, so this is me making good on my promise lmao

Adventures in the Deep Sea and a New Friend

Chapter Summary

> we play another game and then we make a new friend

Chapter Notes

> yall babe and I have done so much planning, I'm so ready to take over the world and now I have the tools to do it

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“This game,” Nedzu explained to Izuku and Aizawa, “is called Deep Sea Adventure! There is another name that I like to call it, of course, but I do believe that manages to get the point across quite well!”

He opened the small blue box with a picture of a submarine on it. It was about the same size as the Insider box, perhaps made by the same company? He took out a black disk, fairly small, a cardboard submarine, three person shaped pieces, and little tokens with numbers on one side.

First he laid out the pale blue triangles that had a single dot on the back, then the slightly darker squares that had two dots, then the darker still pentagons with three, and finally the midnight blue hexagons that had 4 dots on them, all in a line down below the submarine.

“As you can see, there are four levels of treasure, for that is what we are trying to get! You will roll the dice, note they are numbered one to three so the most you can get is six, and there are eight of each type of treasure. The more dots on the back, the larger the range of points! The first set is under four, the second five to nine, the third eight to fourteen, and the last are twelve to sixteen! Very exciting!”

Aizawa frowned. “There’s overlap?”

“Oh yes, and you don’t know what you get until you get it all the way back to the submarine successfully!”

Izuku nodded. “Why are there numbers on the submarine?”

“Ah, that is the oxygen level! As soon as someone starts a turn with treasure in hand, we move down one oxygen for every piece of treasure! Here, let me explain the turns, so you can better see how to get treasure.”

He took one of the person shaped pieces and put it on the submarine.

“First comes oxygen, but since I haven’t even left the submarine yet, I couldn’t possibly have treasure! After that, I roll the dice!”

He did just that, getting a two and a one, to make three. He moved the person down three.

“I have landed on a treasure! I can now choose whether or not I would like to pick it up! In this case, I have no reason to, so I will decline. At that point, my turn is over, since there is nothing more I can do.”

He arranged other pieces on the board, putting the other two people nearby.

“If the situation was like this, and I rolled another three, I would then make a choice. I could keep going down, or decide to turn back! Since I have no treasure, it seems foolish to return to the surface, but

please note that once you turn back, you can only go up. Now, I rolled a three, in this example, but someone is in my way! Fear not, no one can ever occupy the same space, so if you encounter another diver on your way, you simply jump over them."

He moved his piece down, skipping the spaces that had the other players on them.

"Now, another thing that treasure is bad for, is movement! If you have treasure when you move up, back to the submarine, you must subtract the amount from your roll! The treasure is heavy, you see, and drags you down."

He swept the pieces back to the submarine.

"At the point of your turn where you would pick up treasure, you can also choose to drop treasure, in case things get too heavy for you."

Izuku frowned at the submarine. "What happens if the submarine runs out of oxygen and you're still out there?"

Nedzu grinned. "That is where the game's other name comes in. If, on your turn, you lower the oxygen to zero, you finish your turn and then everyone left in the ocean is forced to drop their treasure, in stacks of three, to the bottom of the treasure line."

Aizawa narrowed his eyes. "And what is this other name?"

"Why, the Everybody Dies game!"

~~~~~

Izuku thought that was a pretty good name, all things considered, because in the first round, he tried to get back, but the dice were just not working for him, and his two treasure pieces sank to the bottom of the ocean. Apparently, stacked treasure at the bottom counted for one piece of treasure, so if you could get down there, it might be worth your while, but you had to get down there first.

There were three dives to a game, and they ended up playing twice, thankfully, so Izuku was able to get a handle on it in time to not die quite as often. Still, ambitious plays were high risk, high reward, and if you could get back to the sub in time, you made a lot of points.

Nedzu ended up winning the first game, Aizawa in second, and Izuku in last, but Izuku managed to pull out a come behind win in the second game, which he felt very proud of.

When Aizawa went back to teaching class, Nedzu and Izuku cleaned up the game and Nedzu struck up their usual post game conversation.

“So, what did you learn?”

Izuku hummed. “There are some things you need to sacrifice to get better things later. Also you’ll never get far if you don’t take any risks.”

Nedzu chuckled. “How interesting!”

~~~~~

Izuku liked to take walks when he wasn't with Nedzu. He had met Uraraka at the park, after all, but mostly he liked being outside and people watching. It was something he had done more passively before, but now he actively sought to categorize people as part of his education. Analysis and observation were both skills he was keen to improve upon.

That's probably why he noticed the otherwise really tall boy trying to make himself small.

He watched for a while, trying to figure out what was wrong. The boy was tall, with silver hair, and wore a mask to cover his lower face. He had three sets of arms, connected with a fleshy web, and only the top two were actually hands, clutching his bag, while the other four were ears and eyes, watching and listening to his surroundings.

He watched the boy tense as a group of school children around their age and in the same uniform as the boy rounded the corner. He tried to duck his head, but he was easily a foot taller than Izuku, so huge for an elementary school student (because the other kids were definitely elementary schoolers).

The group of four spotted him and their leader sneered.

Izuku began to frown, remembering the searing explosions, long fingers, and red wings. The leader had bright red hair, but otherwise no one had any visual indications of quirks - oh, that person can change their skin color like a cuttlefish, that's neat.

"Oh, Shouji~!" The leader called out in a sing-song voice and Izuku leapt up from his bench and walked over to the taller boy.

“Shouji!” He smiled at the surprised boy and made sure he was really loud. “I’ve been looking for you! Auntie will get worried if we don’t make it back soon! Come on!”

He gently tugged on the boy’s hand, the top one that was actually a hand, not sure of etiquette, and the taller boy let himself be led away. Izuku glanced behind them as they rounded a corner and saw the four bullies (because that’s definitely what they were) look confused and irritated, but then they just walked off.

As soon as they were officially out of sight, he released the other boy.

“I’m sorry to jump you like that, you just didn’t look comfortable and they didn’t look nice.”

The boy blinked, clearly confused, and one of the ears shifted to a mouth. “How did you know my name?”

Izuku flushed. “The redhead, the leader, he said it out loud. I happened to be paying attention. Sorry, I know we don’t know each other, that must be weird.” He frowned, then nodded, resolute, and smiled up at the silver haired boy. “But I’m Midoriya Izuku, so now we’re even!”

“Shouji… Shouji Mezou.”

He grinned. “Nice to meet you! Anyway, sorry again-”

“How did you know I needed help?”

Izuku blinked and the grin fell from his face. He smiled sadly. “Like recognizes like, I guess.”

Shouji said nothing for a moment, then sighed and stood a bit straighter. “Thank you for helping me, I am sorry for the inconvenience. How can I repay you?”

Izuku giggled. “It wasn’t an inconvenience at all! And there’s no need to repay me, I was just doing what I wanted. I should be thanking *you* for not finding me creepy!”

Shouji shook his head, pulling up the mask when it slipped a little. “Still, you saved me from having to deal with them today. Can I buy you a snack?”

Izuku pouted. Clearly, this kid would not be deterred. He could try one of his psychology techniques, but convincing someone to not do something was a little harder than convincing them to do it. He could always threaten him, or run, or maybe just act crazy and creepy so the boy would want nothing to do with him, but that didn’t seem genuine, and he seemed like a really nice kid! Someone Izuku would love to get to know more!

“Hmm, tell you what, you can buy me an ice cream as long as I can ask you about your quirk.”

Shouji looked alarmed. “My quirk?”

Izuku nodded. “Yeah! It’s really cool! You can change the ends to whatever you want, right? Is it just eyes, ears, and mouths? How can you talk out of a mouth on the end of your arm? Does it also make vocal chords? If you were underwater, could you use a nose or a mouth to breathe even if your head was under the water?” He

blinked and backed off, realizing he had gotten too close and the boy was looking rather flustered.

“Sorry, I got excited…”

Shouji blinked, but took in the deflated boy scuffing his shoe on the sidewalk and smiled under his mask.

“Ok, let’s go get ice cream, and I’ll see about answering those questions…”

~~~~~

Apparently, Shouji was getting bullied for being a mutant, specifically for having a weird mouth. Izuku was incredibly excited to see said weird mouth, but knew that that was not something he would get at their first meeting.

Shouji also got cookie and cream ice cream, which Izuku solemnly declared an acceptable flavour, but Shouji was not nearly as impressed with Izuku’s pistachio.

“They use almond extract to flavor it, you know that, right?”

He huffed, taking another bite of the artificially green ice cream. “I know, but it’s still tasty! Plus, it’s green! The only other green ice cream flavor is matcha and that’s what my mom eats. No thanks!”

Shouji chuckled. “Matcha is a fine flavor, but it’s good to know you
~~~~~

are partial to green things in general, “Midori.” I suppose it comes with the name.”

Izuku narrowed his eyes. “The first syllable of your given name means eye, the second means elephant. Not sure where I’m going with this, but it’s somewhere.”

Shouji snorted. “Yeah, I’m not entirely sure where you’re going with this either.” He glanced at the clock on the wall and sighed, feeding ice cream into various arm mouths (apparently a lot of the structures you need in a regular mouth got made too, so it pretty much functioned as normal, with some extra tubes running up the arms to move the food, water, or air, depending on what he needed, to the correct places. It was really cool and honestly a super sophisticated quirk). “I have to go, my older sister is probably wondering where I am and I don’t want her to tear apart the city looking for me.” He stood up, then paused.

“Thank you, again.”

Izuku smiled. “You know, I’m in that park pretty often after school. Maybe we’ll see each other again!”

He imagined the solemn, tall, bullied boy smiling under his mask.

“Yeah, maybe we will.”

Izuku watched him leave, waving, before he allowed himself to really and truly get angry.

Shouji was really cool and really nice, and he was being bullied for

something as dumb as his appearance? It was ridiculous, in this day and age of quirk, that mutant discrimination was still a thing, and among eight year olds no less! Izuku threw away his empty bowl and practically stalked back to his house, already thinking up how he was going to word this email to Nedzu.

"If I'm not in tomorrow, I'm sending a school and its bullies some thinly veiled threats and fighting mutant discrimination."

Yeah, that would probably be fine, Nedzu would understand.

He got in, said hello to his mother, and immediately went to his computer. He already had the name of the elementary school, having gotten it out of Shouji in their conversation, so he knew where to start looking. Luckily, it took almost no digging to find last year's yearbook, showing all the students.

There was the chameleon kid, the other two goons that didn't have many defining features other than a horrible nose on one and greasy hair on the other, and there was the redhead!

Now he had their names!

He had set up a new email address after realizing he still had his childish one from when he was younger (disregard that eight is still young, he was more *sophisticated* now), and it was perfectly professional and also untraceable, so really, it was perfect for this task!

And if he ended up sending the discrimination laws, links to therapists, and a step by step guide on the best way to dissolve a body, then he was just doing his best as a friend.

Shouji was nice, and these people were not; it was simple, really.

He also decided to send an email to Shouji, but then realized he hadn't gotten the other boy's email, and getting it from the internet and/or doing some digging like he had for the bullies was probably really creepy and he had already been bad enough with the multitude of questions. Best not to push it.

Plus, with any luck, he'd see him again tomorrow!

It was always nice to make new friends!

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Mezou wasn't sure what had happened, but almost overnight, Takashi and his cronies started avoiding him. Any time their eyes met, they would flinch and pale. Some tried to offer smiles and even tried being *nice* to him, which was incredibly strange to say the least, but at least they weren't pulling down his mask, calling him names, excluding him from everything, throwing things, and generally making his life hell.

Mezou considered it a win, even if he didn't understand how it had happened, or why.

Maybe that Midoriya kid was a good luck charm.

… Maybe he'd see him again after school today.
~~~~~

Mezou would like that.

Chapter End Notes

no one yell at me for flavour, sometimes the u is there and sometimes its not, its not worth fighting over, I do both because I'm a mess

anyway, FT is ending soon, so we get another fic! Here's a strawpoll link! Go vote on what you might want to read next! There are more options than last time, so give it a gander (and you can pick multiple things).

Hope you enjoyed another round of Mido taking over the world (its gonna happen, guys, but its slow, these things that time)

A Meeting of Friends

Chapter Summary

everyone else sees Nedzu's reaction to Baby's First Blackmail, friends meet up, and then new friends are made, maybe

Chapter Notes

we have two friend meetings, the chapter title works twice

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Aizawa was a young teacher, with simple needs.

Coffee, his terrible yellow sleeping bag Hizashi had bought him as a joke, his cats, and instilling the fear of God in his students.

What he didn’t need was Nedzu cackling in the teachers' lounge.

Every once in a while, he would seemingly calm down and sip his tea with a chuckle, but then he would reread something and the laughter (if you could call it that) would come back full force.

Aizawa was scared to ask.

“Hey Nedzu!”

Hizashi had no such fear.

“Isn’t the little listener usually here by now?”

Nedzu chortled. “Oh, he’s not coming in today! He has a… personal project to attend to! He’s making more friends, you see!”

Hizashi blinked, even as everyone else in the room tensed, sensing the clear threat. “Oh, how nice! Good for him!”

Nedzu smiled. “Indeed! I do love his tactics as well…”

Aizawa *really* didn’t like that.

Hizashi merely blinked again, then smiled and shot their boss a thumbs up. “Neato! Welp, I have a class to teach! Tell the little listener I miss him and hope his friendship gathering goes well!”

Nedzu sipped his tea delicately and chuckled to himself. “Oh yes, it shall go *quite* well.”

Yeah, not touching that with a ten foot pole.

He needed more coffee.

~~~~~

Ochako was more than happy to welcome the new tall boy to their after school play sessions. He introduced himself as Shouji Mezou, and he was a *god* at Hide and Seek. The ends of his extra arms could turn into ears and eyes, which let him find people way faster, and for
~~~~~

someone so tall and big, he was really good at hiding and sneaking around, too!

She really thought he was a good addition to the group; even Explodey acknowledged his skill.

Plus, if he was getting mean, Shouji would help her float him into the sky, making him a very angry and explosive kite.

(The boy looked nervous and flinched at the anger, but Midori was quick to assure him that "Kacchan" was getting better and that he was perfectly safe. Kacchan didn't seem to agree, but he did quiet down when she told Shouji to just let him go if the explosive boy was bothering him.)

"OK!" She proclaimed, "I think we have an undisputed champion of hide and seek, so let's switch it up! Midori, what do you want to play?"

"Heroes and villains!"

"Didn't ask you, Explodey, you can pick next. Midori?"

The green boy grinned. "I don't mind. Chako, will you be the villain?"

She grinned at the nervous flush that overtook his cheeks, but honestly, she loved the nickname, so she wasn't about to mention it. "Yeah! I'll float you, foul heroes!"

Explodey cackled, making her think he would have made a better villain, but she already knew how he would get about that, so she merely ran after him, yelling out evil plans on the way.

"I'm All Might! You'll never beat me, villain!"

"And I'm, um, Zero! The fearsome villain that will launch you into space!"

Midori giggled and grabbed Shouji's hand. "Come on, Webmaster, we have to help All Might!"

The solemn boy nodded. "Of course, Green… Boy."

Ochako couldn't help it, she snickered. These names were so silly, but at least they had all come up with new ones, unlike Explodey!

"All Might, huh? Didn't know you worked with other pros!"

Bakugo scoffed. "No way, these are sidekicks!"

Midori sighed. "Kacchan, you and I both know that All Might has only ever had one sidekick, Sir Nighteye."

"…Whatever! What are we even fighting this villain on. Anyway?"

"Oh, good point," she stopped, "I kind of just went off, didn't I? Um, how about, I'm robbing the bank? The bank being the playground

over there, the part with the slide."

Midori nodded. "Sounds good! Now, Zero! We will stop you, us heroes three!"

She giggled. "Not if I can escape down the slide!"

He gasped. "No! Webmaster, cut off her escape route! I'll help corner her, and All Might can take her out!"

She raced them to the playground, climbing up the rock wall and ducking for the slide. All clear, for now.

She started to slide down and suddenly she was wrapped in a web of flesh. She shrieked in joy and desperately tapped on Shouji. She felt him murmur in surprise and heard Midori on the outside.

"No, Webmaster! All Might, get him down!"

"I AM HERE, ROUND CHEEKS, TO BRING YOU DOWN!"

Shouji huffed out a "Literally" that she only heard due to her proximity and she felt them slowly sink to the ground after Explodey collided with them. With the other two heroes holding them down, she was forced to release Shouji's gravity. He readjusted his grip to make her face out, arms pinned to her sides, and she watched Bakugo and Midori grin at her. She could see how they grew up together, their vicious grins were almost the same.

“We’ve caught you, Zero! Time to give back what you stole!”

“Oh?” She grinned. “Are you sure? What about my accomplice?”

Explodey scowled. “Accomplice? Who the fuck is your accomplice?”

Catching on, Midori’s eyes widened, and he grinned. “Oh, them! Right! Shouji, I can assure you, they are a much bigger threat! I can take care of Zero!”

Confused, Shouji released her, and she caught herself before grinning at Midori. He grabbed her hand, as if he was keeping her contained, and as soon as they were turned away, they took off running.

“You fools! Green Boy is really the Green Menace! He was working with me all along!”

“And,” he yelled back, “the bank is full of bombs! Better hurry before it blows and the civilian hostages die!”

Bakugo cursed and Shouji immediately took off running. Ochako and Midori looked at each other with a grin and let go of each other’s hands, darting off in two different directions.

“You can’t catch us and save the hostages, heroes!”

Yeah, this was a fun game.

~~~~~

Izuku was quite pleased with the results of his emails. The bullies hadn't replied, but the school had!

"Who are you"

"How did you get this information"

"Why are you threatening us"

"We will see you in court"

How cute! They thought they could find him? With an email Nedzu had helped him set up? No, not a chance.

He sent back a smiley face.

That was it.

He forwarded the whole email chain to Nedzu, confident his friend would like to see his progress and would no doubt be able to give him better tips on what to do next. Izuku was having a lot more fun with this than he thought, and Shouji had looked so much better today than before! He had even gotten the boy's email and started sending him articles on other shapeshifting quirks, octopi, and things like neural plasticity. He was just so excited, and he wanted Shouji to have fun and realize his quirk was really cool!
~~~~~

And so he rambled about how obviously the somatosensory cortex on Shouji's brain, or the part that deals with someone's sense of touch, had a much larger region allocated to his hands and arms, and not just because he had more of them either. In fact, his brain was probably one of the most highly adaptable, since he could change things and presumably, each appendage had one part of the brain, despite it changing form whenever Shouji wanted it to. It was simply fascinating, and Izuku honestly wondered many new things which he didn't actually ask Shouji because he wasn't sure the other boy would know.

For example, if he made more eyes, do they connect to the somatosensory cortex like usual, or do they send information to the occipital lobe? Or do they do both, and the information travels to the occipital lobe from the ss cortex?

Same for his nose, ears and mouth, because technically, the ss cortex only covered your sense of touch, and not anything else. The other senses were covered by completely different areas of the brain, so how did that work?

Shouji, in reply, sent back a picture of mint ice cream, labelled "we forgot a flavor."

That led to a rather large email chain debating on different ice cream flavors, again, before they agreed on a few things:

1. Vanilla was underrated
2. Red velvet was overrated because it was really just chocolate but with dye you can taste
3. The only green ice cream that was naturally green was matcha, therefore disqualifying the others as being true "green" ice creams
4. And bread in ice cream had to be treated very carefully so it

wasn’t bad.

That last one was a bit more of a point of contention, since Shouji had chosen cookies and creme last time, which is technically an ice cream with bread. Other bread add ons included cookie dough, brownie bites, and even graham crackers in one of the s'mores flavors Izuku had seen earlier. They were both in agreement that graham crackers were not something you should put in ice cream because it's just going to make sand, cookie dough and oreo chunks were better, and brownie bites were on thin ice.

Any bread done wrong could just get soggy, gross, and make the overall texture of the ice cream a nightmare.

They agreed on the other three points pretty easily, though.

Izuku found this ice cream company based in the US that had fun names for their flavors and sent one to Shouji.

“Why Phish Food?”

“Because octopi eat fish.”

Shouji, in revenge, sent back a picture of a different flavor of theirs.

“...Chunky Monkey?”

“Because you’re bananas.”

It was good.

~~~~~

It wasn't so bad, being him.

Sure, no one talked to him and thought he was weird, but those were the humans, and he didn't want to talk to them anyway.

Humans said mean things for no reason, like saying he looked funny, or he'd never have any friends, or excluding him. They'd call him names and he'd always be picked last for PE, despite being bigger than almost everyone else.

He didn't mind, per se, since he didn't really like PE either.

His mother loved him, really and truly, and let him have a pet.

He liked animals a lot better than humans.

He didn't like talking to anything that wasn't an animal, honestly, at least not out loud.

If the kids at school would give him a chance, they'd see he was incredibly fast at typing and texting. So much so that his mom had actually gotten him a phone, just so he would feel more comfortable, and have a way of communicating with people without opening his mouth.
~~~~~

No one really liked it when he opened his mouth.

His mom tried to get him to talk, but why, when they both knew sign language and he could just text her?

It was better than opening your mouth and nothing coming out.

He hadn't spoken in so long, he wasn't certain he could.

He would whisper to the animals, of course. It was quiet enough that his vocal chords didn't even vibrate, thus preventing his throat from hurting from trying to use them after so long, but it was enough for them to hear him, he knew.

Animals were always better at listening than humans were.

School was fine, when the humans weren't being terrible. He was getting fine grades, the food was fine, and it wasn;t a long walk from home, but it did have stray cats on the way.

He liked to feed them and whisper to them about his day.

Sometimes he wished he could be a cat too, even if it was just a stray.

They seemed to have it good.

One day, he noticed another boy was feeding and whispering to the cats, and he recognized him from school. His nerves almost made him run, but he had bought special treats for the cats this morning and didn't want to have to explain to his mother why he had gotten them.

Best to use them.

He smiled shyly as he crouched down, and the other boy glanced at him.

Neither of them said anything, just feeding the cats.

He liked it.

At the end of it, he felt like they might have been friends.

Maybe he'd see the other boy again.

The rumors about him were clearly wrong.

Neither of them were what they said they were.

They were just quiet people who liked animals more than people.

Nothing wrong with that.

Chapter End Notes

whomstve were they? I surely don't know...

Field Trips has one more chapter left, the epilogue, and then it's done! Thanks again for all the votes, 190 different people have voted (or gotten around the restriction lmao) and its really close between TLT and Placebo Effect, both of which are set to be really good!

See you next time!

A Hop Skip and a Jump

Chapter Summary

things progress

Chapter Notes

tw: not graphic but a cat does die

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It had been over a year since Izuku had met Shouji and Chako and Nedzu and everyone, and he was feeling way more confident than he probably had any right to be, to be entirely honest. Nedzu had told him recently that he technically was starting high school education, and with middle school usually still two years away, that was frankly astounding. He was turning 10 in a month and he was really excited to finally be in double digits, like Kacchan.

Speaking of the explosive boy, he had mellowed out some. With Chako keeping him on the straight and narrow, as it were, he had completely ditched his old cronies and was more of an angry big brother than a bully now. Izuku was almost certain that school life would be much better if he went back now, but he was so far ahead and enjoying spending time with Nedzu that he wasn't planning on it any time soon.

Shouji had gotten a better mask, that reminded him of a white haired character from a ninja anime Izuku had seen was pretty popular, so it covered his neck all the way up past his ears. It looked really cool, in Izuku's opinion, and it never slipped down like his old ones did, so he thought it was a pretty big improvement. Based on how happy Shouji had been when he got it, he agreed.

Chako, in the meantime, had been using Kacchan (and Shouji and Izuku, when the opportunity arose) as quirk training by keeping them up in the air for a long time, and she was also getting stronger. Actually, all four of them had been going to a dojo for several months

now, to get strong and buff! They even met a nice boy at the dojo, but he was many years ahead of them in experience. Still, he was nice. Chako was probably the strongest, physically, out of all of them, something Kacchan was quick to explode about.

They had all been getting better, though, helping each other. In return for helping her stretch her quirk limits, Kacchan was getting better at aerial combat and mobility. Izuku was pretty sure that it would be any day that he was using explosions to propel himself through the air even without her assistance. Shouji was faster at switching between appendages and he was really good at stealth, despite how tall he was.

Izuku, in the meantime, had been getting smarter.

Nedzu was overjoyed to teach him everything he needed to know about the human mind and body language, to the point where Izuku could dissect anyone he came across just on the street. Not that he would, of course, he still got nervous talking to people he didn't know, but he was still pretty good. Nedzu had made it a game to watch the security cameras in the school and have Izuku just. Rip into people and dissect them completely. It was hard without the audio and not having a perfect view, but it was really funny.

He also got to watch the entrance exam, which was really fun!

He was currently walking back from UA, on his way to the station, completely lost in his head. After school, the other three were planning on going to Kacchan's house to play some video games, just to unwind after most of the others had the first tests of the season.

He tripped over something and barely managed to catch himself in time.

He looked back, eyes wide, to see a person slouched against the wall.

“Oh, I’m so sorry, I didn’t mean to trip over you! Are you alright?”

The person, a lizard looking guy, wasn’t even paying attention, but he murmured something Izuku couldn’t hear.

He leaned closer with a frown.

“…just a lizard, can’t be a doctor… all that training, wasted…”

Izuku frowned more. Was this what he thought it was.

“Um, sir, are you ok?”

Unfocused eyes trailed up from the street to meet his. “Nah, kid, I’m not, but don’t you worry about it.”

“What happened?”

“It’s nothing kid, really.”

“You didn’t notice when I tripped over you earlier, so obviously it's something to make you this upset. Why don’t you tell me about it?”

The lizard man shook his head, purple hair falling over his listless eyes. “No point, I should have known better. No one wants to be treated by a doctor who looks like this.”

“Like… what?”

The guy stared. “Kid, I have a mutation quirk.”

“So they didn’t hire you because you have a mutation quirk?”

“...Yeah? I mean, it was just an internship, it’s not that big of a deal…”

Izuku nodded once then held out his hand. “Come with me.”

The man looked confused. “Um, what?”

Izuku smiled brightly, putting on all his charms. “I know someone who can help sort out your problem!”

The lizard man stumbled to his feet with a hefty haul from Izuku and Izuku was quick to hold his hand, turning back in the direction he had just come.

“Oh, I didn’t introduce myself! I’m Midoriya Izuku, and I’m turning ten soon!”

“...Iguchi Shuichi, fifteen. Nice to meet you, I guess.”

Izuku nodded. “Nice to meet you, Mr. Iguchi! Now, you said you were looking for an internship? For what, if I may ask?”

“I want to be a doctor when I grow up, and I have some training already, but to go forward I needed more experience to get into a good med school.”

Izuku frowned, but continued to tug the teenager along. “And just because you’re green and have scales they said no? Did they even look at your credentials?”

“I mean… maybe? I dunno.”

Izuku continued to pry information out of him, distracting him fully from the fact they were walking into UA, until Izuku knocked once on Nedzu’s door and then walked in.

“Hi Nedzu!”

“Oh, hello, Izuku! I see you brought a friend!”

Izuku smiled up at the teen. “Yep! This is Mr. Iguchi, and he’s a victim of mutant discrimination!”

Nedzu’s smile got wider. “Is he, now? How unfortunate. Mr. Iguchi, would you care for some tea while we discuss our plans going forward?”

Shuichi looked between the smiling young boy and the smiling rodent he now recognized as the principal of UA and sat down dumbly.

What had he gotten himself into?

Izuku was more than happy to text the group chat that he was going to be a little late, because he got to help Mr. Iguchi! (After a couple more times of being addressed like that, he had insisted on them dropping the Mr, but Izuku wasn't about to stop. He seemed like a nice guy.) Nedzu was quick to write down the names of the places and doctors who hadn't hired him on grounds of his quirk (because there were more than one, it seemed, to make him that upset when Izuku had found him), and then phoned Recovery Girl and asked her to come down to the office.

Mr. Iguchi happened to have his resume on him, or maybe Nedzu had pulled it from the files of the doctors he had probably hacked, and she wordlessly read it over, checking his credentials.

"Perfect, I've been looking for an assistant."

Mr. Iguchi was frozen, dumbstruck, as Nedzu cheerfully offered him a job working under Recovery Girl (who gave Izuku a pat on the head and some fish shaped gummies) for double what any of the other companies were offering.

Izuku had waved goodbye when the contracts came out, promising he'd be back tomorrow before dashing out the door and running to the station. He didn't find anyone else to trip over on his way, so he considered that a success. He was only half an hour later than usual, and his friends very quickly added him into the game.

"So Midori," Chako started, "what kept you?"

Kacchan scoffed. “Zuku probably found another loser to adopt. Been too long since Arms, he’s due.”

Shouji snorted. “Are you one of his “adopted losers,” then?”

Kacchan predictably exploded, and Izuku couldn’t help but giggle. “I dunno about *adoption* but I did help someone get a job! He couldn’t before because he has a mutation quirk so no one would hire him, but I sorted it out!”

He didn’t notice the other three exchange glances. They had, over the past year, come to realize what exactly izuku meant when he “sorted” things out, and were quite certain that someone was about to lose their job if nothing else.

“That’s… that’s great, Midori! Discrimination is wrong!”

He nodded, quite proud. “Yep! Recovery Girl has a new assistant now! I’m glad I’m going to see more of Mr. Iguchi!”

Kacchan clicked his tongue. “How old is this guy? Thirty?”

“Fifteen!”

Chako was the only one who nodded. Sure, her parents were making more money in hero central, but she knew first hand that there was no shame in wanting a job at a young age like that. “So if he’s working with Recovery Girl, is he a nurse?”

“Yep! He wanted to be a doctor, but all the further classes needed him to have experience, so he was looking for an internship.”

Kacchan chuckled. “No better internship than at UA, lucky bastard.”

“Kacchan! Language!”

“Fuck you.”

Izuku rolled his eyes. Trying to get Kacchan to not swear was an exercise in futility.

Chako whooped as she slid into first place, and everyone else startled, focusing back in on the game.

“I’m going to beat your asses!”

“CHAKO!”

“Hehe, sorry Midori!”

~~~~~

Todoroki Shouto felt pretty much nothing, if he could help it.
~~~~~

Emotions were dangerous, and the ones he felt only hurt besides.

Anger, sadness, grief, fear, guilt.

They were all terrible, so best to keep everything under wraps.

It had been 5 years since his oldest brother had disappeared. Father said he was dead, and Fuyumi and Natsuo seemed to believe him, but Shouto wasn't so sure. Knowing what his brother had gone through, since he was going through it himself, he had probably run away.

Shouto hoped he was doing ok, wherever he was.

Maybe once Father was gone, he'd come back.

…He missed Touya.

~~~~~

Todoroki Touya, known to most as Dabi, was not having a great time. Pickpocketing and mild shoplifting could only get him so far, and he had been on the streets, going from place to place, for five years. It wasn't fun, and squatting was worse, but he was used to it.

Anything was better than going home, he told himself.

He eyed the crows perched on the power lines above him and sighed, shoving burned hands into pockets and ignoring the ache contact
~~~~~

gave.

“You sure have it lucky, huh? All the flying you want, free. I guess that’s why they have the saying free as a bird, huh? Anyone want to trade? I hear not many animals have quirks. What do you say, you take my fire, I take your wings?”

The birds cawed back at him and he chuckled. “No, no takers? Come on, cut this kid some slack.”

Normally, he didn’t like being called a kid. He was seventeen, almost eighteen, and he had been taking care of himself for longer than his sperm donor had cared, and that had to count for something.

Maybe it was just something about the birds that got him all sentimental.

~~~~~

Izuku heard the crying, the heart wrenching sobs that were trying to be quiet, and he stopped.

Sure, it was none of his business, but even if he wasn’t going to be a hero (it was a back up plan for when he dismantled the current government, but not high on his priority list) he had always been one to help people, and that wasn’t going to change today.

He peeked his head in the alley, making no sounds.
~~~~~

It was a boy.

He had purple hair that stuck up like Chako had run her fingers through it, and his back was to Izuku, hunched over something on the ground.

He edged himself into the corner of the boy's vision and saw him stiffen.

"Are you alright?"

Purple eyes shot to him and then away, not giving him an answer.

Izuku's eyes followed until he saw what the boy was crying over.

It was a cat.

He immediately stiffened and gasped. The poor creature was wheezing lightly and Izuku could see red matted on its fur.

"Who did this?"

The boys both startled at the anger in Izuku's voice, but he quickly recovered. "If you can give me names I can make sure this never happens again."

The boy's eyes narrowed in confusion. "What could you possibly do? He's going to die, it's too late." He looked back at the cat, breath

stuttering, and gently pet it. “They followed me, it’s my fault…”

Izuku crouched down, edging closer. “It was most certainly not your fault, unless you somehow made them do this.”

The boy flinched, but shook his head.

“Then it wasn’t your fault. At least you were able to be here for him.”

Izuku looked down at the cat and his mouth pursed. “But still, give me names. This is cruel and should not go unpunished.”

Hitoshi honestly didn’t know what to think of this innocent looking boy who could sound so dark talking about his bullies, but he had kept his distance, which Hitoshi appreciated.

“...It wouldn’t help anyway. The school wouldn’t do anything.”

“I can work around that, but that’s not my point,” Izuku grumbled.

Hitoshi wasn’t really listening. “I should have known I couldn’t have nice things,” he whispered, “but I thought that just maybe, I could have this. I wasn’t careful, they followed me, and then they saw him and started throwing,” his breath hitched, “r-rocks, and…”

He sobbed again and Izuku looked on with sadness.

“Do you want a hug?”

The boy looked at him in confusion, but nodded.

Izuku nodded back, whipping out his flip phone. He scrolled for a bit then pressed call.

“Hello?”

“Hi, Shou-jiji, are you available right now?”

“...I am, why?”

“Ok please come to this location, see you soon!”

Izuku hung up and sent the location, as promised, getting back a series of question marks and putting his phone away.

“He shouldn’t be long, but no one I know gives better hugs.”

The boy nodded slowly, still confused, and Izuku started a little.

“Oh, but I could hug you until he got here, if that would help?”

He nodded again and Izuku carefully crept forward to wrap his arms around the taller boy.

“I’m sorry they hurt you.”

“…“

Hitoshi clammed up, knowing this wouldn’t last. This kid, whoever he was, would hear about his quirk and would leave. Sure, violence against animals was wrong, so maybe he’d give him the benefit of the doubt for like, another thirty seconds, but he was bringing his friend too, oh god, what if it was just to beat Hitoshi up? What if this was all an elaborate set up from Hachiko and this kid was small to throw him off?

But the hug was really warm.

The light from the street was blocked out as a tall figure came in and he heard a voice rumble.

“Izuku, you gave me no details.”

Hitoshi paled. This guy was huge!

Izuku leapt up. “Shouji! This guy needs a hug, bullies again, and you’re the best hugger I know!”

Shouji raised an eyebrow. “This guy? Do you even know his name?”

The green one blanched and released Hitoshi before bowing. “Oh my god, I’m so sorry, I hugged you and you don’t even know my name! I’m Midoriya Izuku, this is Shouji Mezou, my friend.”

“...Shinsou Hitoshi.”

Shouji walked down the alley, footfalls near silent. “Nice to meet you. I hear you need a hug?”

Hitoshi was nervous, but stood slowly and nodded.

It was really nice; Izuku had been right, Shouji was a really good hugger.

“So, those names!”

Hitoshi peeked out from the web of arms to look at the bright eyed green child. “You still want their names?”

“Of course!”

“Izuku,” Shouji rumbled, and Hitoshi felt it through his chest, “please do not blackmail them.”

“I hardly call it blackmailing, Jiji.”

“That nickname still makes me sound like a grandpa.”

“You happen to be the most responsible of the group!”

“No, wait, no distraction, do not threaten them.”

“I have no idea what you’re talking about.”

“Oh, so Takashi and the gang just decided to back off on their own?”

“Is that what his name was? Huh, I never knew!”

“Izuku.”

“A little motivation goes a long way.”

Hitoshi couldn’t help it, he laughed.

It started as a giggle, then a chuckle, and then a chortle, and then a full belly laugh, cocooned in the warm embrace of a really tall boy who apparently had also been subject to Izuku at one point. Eventually, it turned back into crying and he sank to the ground, arms never leaving their place wrapped around him.

He felt Shouji still and barely heard him hiss, “They did that to the cat?”

Izuku hummed darkly.

“I changed my mind, Shinsou, we need those names.”

Hitoshi left that alleyway three names lighter and his phone two numbers heavier.

They were nice.

Kouda would probably like them too.

Chapter End Notes

> everyone who guessed kouda and shinsou was totally correct, but we also get MORE fun kids, like Spinner, who apparently is 15 at this time! What a wild ride!

A Broken Baby Bird

Chapter Summary

> meant to have this next chapter but then, oops, got possessed, wrote it anyway, that was the vibe

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Iguchi Shuichi wasn't sure how the hell he had gotten himself in this situation, to be entirely honest with you.

I mean, he could like, trace it back, go through the events that led up to this moment, but wrapping his head around the fact that it had happened, even though he had lived it, was really really hard.

He had been at work, as his fifteen year old, lizard self, helping Recovery Girl with any patients, mostly reckless hero students, and getting taught. She seemed to like it, and they did do quite a bit of gossiping. It took Shuichi a bit to warm up to the sheer snark that came out of this old woman, but the first time he had cracked a joke, she had chuckled, so he considered it a win. He was also learning a lot and no one was looking at him funny for having green scaly skin.

Nedzu had asked.

Still, it was just as school was ending when the intercom buzzed and Nedzu's voice came on.

"Mr Iguchi, you have a call on line two!"

He had no idea who could be calling him, or why Nedzu was still

calling him Mr, but he picked up the phone on the wall and hit the button for line two.

“Um, hello, this is Iguchi Shuichi…?”

“Mr Iguchi! Are you free right now?”

“Midoriya? Uh, yeah, school just ended and I don’t think we have any last minute patients,” he looked at Recovery Girl and she nodded, “so I’m free, why?”

“Have you ever treated a bird before?”

“Um, no, kid, I’m barely a nurse, I’m not a vet.”

“Ok, different question, do you know how to treat someone with a bird mutation? Like, broken feathers, maybe broken wings?”

“…Kid.”

“Damn, guessing that’s a no then.”

“You’re ten, why are you swearing?”

“Kacchan.”

Ah, that made sense, actually. Shuichi had only met the rest of the gang a few times, but Bakugo was explosive and violent in everything, including his language. Shouji was much more the teenager's style, Shinsou and Kouda a close second, since they were also both pretty quiet.

"But anyway, can you bring things to treat bruises and cuts? He looks pretty banged up even if we ignore the wings for now, not that we should let this go."

"Should I just… bring Recovery Girl?"

"No, he's too tired for her quirk."

"Ok, but what about just her general medical expertise?"

"…Can you put her on the phone for me?"

He wordless held out the phone to his boss and she ambled over with a raised eyebrow to take it.

"Yes, Izuku?"

He didn't hear Izuku's side of the conversation.

"Of course… the Commission? Why? … Izuku, have you done something illegal? … Put Kouda on the phone, sweetie. Oh, then just put it on speaker phone so he can hear."

There was a pause before she nodded to herself. “Hello dear, is what Izuku said true? … Tch, Izuku will want to send that information to Nedzu, we can get it sorted. You can tell me more when I get there.”

She hung the phone back up and didn’t even bother pretending as she looked directly into the camera. “You’ve completely corrupted that boy, Nedzu, but he’s doing good things, so I can't say I mind. We’ll be out for the next few hours, and you might want to look at staff openings for young adults with little experience.”

Without waiting for the rat’s reply (Shuichi knew Nedzu heard all) she gathered up her house call bag and gestured him out the door.

“Have you ever gone on a house visit before, Iguchi?”

“Uh, no ma’am. Are you sure you need me for this?”

She snorted. “Need. Hmm, I suppose I don’t, but it will be a good experience, and he did call you first.”

Shuichi nodded hesitantly. What was all that about birds? …What was he getting himself into?

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It had started out pretty tame, in all honesty. As soon as Shinsou become completely introduced to the group and saw how Izuku would fight anyone and everyone who discriminated against anyone for any reason (the boys who had thrown rocks at the cat had all found
~~~~~

themselves expelled the next day and Hitoshi had never been happier), he was quick to bring in Kouda Kouji, a tall, shy, rock looking boy and his first friend who spoke to animals more than people.

But boy, was he fast at typing.

Izuku figured that a life of not wanting to talk out loud made for alternative methods of communication. He signed with Shinsou, and Kacchan, surprisingly, and Izuku immediately asked Nedzu if they could add JSL to their lessons. He was delighted to comply, and Present Mic helped out, since he was fluent. His texting was almost as fast as talking would be, and sometimes, he was faster than Izuku was at mumbling, which is a feat!

But anyway, they had been playing games, heroes vs villains, and Izuku had asked if the birds would do recon for him, getting them intel on the villains' locations. Kouda had been more than happy to agree, and after that, Kouda's team always won on the information front. Put Izuku, Shouji, and Kouda together?

Well, it was a done game.

Then they started talking about how they had all met, and Shinsou had gotten confused.

"Wait, Midoriya, you live on like, the other side of the district. What were you doing over there?"

Izuku merely smiled. "I like to walk around and see if there are people who need help! Also it helps me practice my people skills!"

“Oh, are you bad at talking to people?”

“Hehe, not those kind of people skills!”

Izuku hadn’t elaborated, just smiled, but then Shinsou turned to Shouji. “What about you? You don’t go to our school, so why were you only five minutes away?”

“I’m actually in the district next door to you. Plus, I’m pretty fast, especially when Izuku calls for something. Need to make sure he’s not doing anything reckless or terrifying.”

Hitoshi had just stared at Izuku, trying to parse the image of the boy in front of him with the word “terrifying,” but eventually brushed it off. No way, he was too small and innocent looking. Not a bad bone in this boy’s body.

…Then again, he had gotten those boys expelled; at least, Hitoshi thought so.

Kouda signed something and Shinsou nodded.

“Kouda likes to use the birds to keep an eye on the strays that don’t like to move, in case he can’t make his rounds. Plus they warn him when jerks are on the way.”

Kacchan scoffed, leaning back on his hands. “Just kill them.”

Chako rolled her eyes. “Blasty, what did we say about murder?”

“Wait for Zuku to approve.”

“NO! We said NO murder, Explodey!”

“Unless you can get away with it.”

“Kacchan,” Izuku chided, “why murder someone when you could just…” He made a hand motion and a face and everyone stared.

“When you could just *what* ?”

“You know!” He did it again.

Shouji shook his head. “Izuku, no one knows what that means.”

The boy blinked. “Oh. Oh well, my point still stands. Murder is just so messy. There are much better ways to ruin someone’s life.”

Hitoshi changed his mind. Terrifying definitely fit.

So Izuku asked Kouda if the birds could keep an eye on a few things for him, watch out for any human strays, like Mr. Iguchi had been, to find anyone who needed help. Of course, they wouldn’t help everyone, they would have to be vetted first, Izuku wouldn’t just help any random person on the street, he was ten, not stupid.

One thing led to another, and suddenly Kouji found himself spying on the Hero Commission.

"They're kind of shady," Izuku muttered, "I am 95% sure they're hiding something. Some cover up about a top hero, probably. Maybe Best Jeanist actually killed someone and they have to cover it up because he's so popular."

Then the birds had come back distressed and Kouji had to calm them down for ten whole minutes before he could understand what they were saying.

The commission were hurting a bird, they said, hurting them every day, really bad, for a long time.

Kouji wasn't a fan of humans in general with the exception of this weird group of ten year olds, but he really hated people who were cruel to animals.

He texted Izuku about how he was going for some in person recon, and got a thumbs up and a question for location.

He wasn't expecting everyone to show up, dressed up like tourists.

"Hi, Kouda! We're here to help!"

Bakugo had, of course, rolled his eyes and scoffed, saying he was only here to keep an eye on Zuku, but Kouji knew that the whole group was very easily swept up in Izuku and his schemes.

No one else could forgive animal cruelty either.

The birds flew down to him at his call and he got a basic general location of the window they were looking through to see this injured bird. They led the group of six ten year olds to that side of the Hero Commission building.

Izuku and Shouji, best at climbing and stealth, were helped above and beside the building by Chako, making them lightweight, and Shouji stretched out his limbs, forming an eye on the top end, to peek in the window that they could only see because of their height.

Kouji watched him stiffen and Izuku tugged on the boy, wanting to look as well, no doubt to get a good layout of the area so he could form a plan.

Kouji watched the green boy's smile freeze on his face and he became very, very still. Shouji lowered him again and Chako gently let them float down.

Izuku was still smiling, but everyone knew it wasn't a happy one.

"Ok! I have a plan!"

Kouji rubbed his hands together nervously and signed, "How was the bird?"

Izuku's empty gaze turned to him, smile never leaving his face.

“Yeah, it’s someone with a bird mutation quirk! From the brief bit I saw, they are training him to the point of death! I recognized some psychological tactics that lead me to believe he’s being manipulated, and I don’t have much knowledge of birds, but something tells me they were suppressing some of his traits!”

“Zuku, you were looking in the window for two seconds.”

“And that was all I needed!”

Hitoshi clenched and unclenched his hands. “So, what are we going to do?”

Izuku hummed, smile seeming a bit more real, and a bit more predatory.

“I’m so glad you asked!”

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Sanji Chou really did not like her job, in all honesty. Running the front desk at the Hero Commission was like getting run over by a car three times a day and just after you get up, someone throws a rock at your head.

At least the pay was good.

Today was a day where she was getting run over four times. Honestly, the amount of people who called about a villain attack was
~~~~~

ridiculous. They had local hero agencies, they were the ones to be called! The only thing to do in those cases was to ask them their location, then give them the number of the nearest agency. Really, they were the Commission, not the heroes. Honestly, the name probably threw people off, they should rebrand, just so Chou didn't have to deal with it.

When she got a call from a panicked girl, explosions in the background with a terrible cackle and some scattered and distant screams, she could already feel a headache coming on.

"Miss, I'm going to need you to calm down and tell me your location. Do you know the closest hero agency?"

This girl or woman was hysterical; Chou was getting nothing out of her any time soon.

Welp, path two, using government resources to trace the call and get the location that way.

As she was running the software, someone came up to the desk and showed her their badge, as was standard. She didn't even spare them more than a glance (tall, plastic card, check, check) before buzzing them in. She did not have time to deal with people coming back late from their lunch breaks, she had to find this phone call before people died and the Hero Commission was blamed.

Tracing, tracing…

The program put out an error and she cursed internally.

“Miss, I really need you to give me something to work with, or I can’t get the heroes to your location.”

The person just kept blubbering, something about a park, which was helpful except for the fact that there were parks everywhere, and the explosion villain in the background said something about cheeks hurrying it up? Hamming it up? Chou wasn’t sure. Sounded angry regardless.

Ugh, this was the worst job. She should probably quit.

~~~~~

Shouji and Izuku walked in without a hitch, Shouji using his height to pose as a worker while the lady at the front desk was occupied with Chako and Kacchan’s phone call (Hitoshi and the birds were helping with the screams) and Izuku using his lack of height to just duck under the view from the desk.

Was it illegal to mislead someone like this?

Yeah, probably, but Izuku’s phone was pretty much untraceable and they were torturing a teenager, so like.

Justified and probably not going to have consequences.

He had already mentally mapped the general direction of where they had seen the red winged boy and Shouji was more than happy to make sure no one caught them, keeping extra eyes and ears out at all times. They had both gotten pretty quiet footed, so no problems there.
~~~~~

Slow and steady won the race, they just had to get in, get the bird boy, and get out without getting caught.

Easy.

…Even if they were ten.

Shouji stopped him before they hit a corner.

A mouth formed right next to Izuku's ear.

"I think I found him. No one else around, but his breathing is… bad, it's bad."

Izuku nodded and peeked around the corner and his friend.

There was one door at the end of the hall, a few feet away.

It had a deadbolt on it.

Izuku's blood boiled at the thought. First they tortured him, then they locked him up, not even tending to his wounds? Were they trying to kill him? Izuku didn't even care that the Commission was technically the backbone of today's society, he was tattling to Nedzu and burning it all to the ground.

Nedzu would probably enjoy it as much as he would, honestly.

He gently slid the deadbolt away, Shouji watching the hallways to ensure no one was coming to check on them and the door creaked open. They both tensed, but no alarms went off, so Izuku opened it the rest of the way.

The bird boy murmured something and tried to get up, stumbling as he did so, before he stood tall, at attention, even though he was wobbling and bleeding from multiple cuts.

Izuku gasped.

His red feathers were bent in places, and one wing was hanging limp.

He hurried over to the older boy and gently grabbed his arms, trying to steady him.

“Jiji, I need you, he can’t walk.”

Shouji was in the room in an instant, carefully lifting the barely taller boy and arranging him in his arms, letting the limp wing hang on the outside, where it briefly dragged on the floor.

“Izuku, if I’m holding him, my senses are dulled.”

He nodded. “That’s fine. We just have to be fast.”

He untucked Shouji's phone from his back pocket and opened it up to text the distraction team.

"Omw out, wrap it up and keep secretary distracted!"

He got a thumbs up back and slipped the phone back where he found it, honestly a feat since they were speed walking and Shouji had much longer legs than Izuku.

Walking back out the special employee only doors they had come in through (honestly, the fact they had managed to avoid everyone was incredible) revealed the poor, haggard secretary frantically trying to calm Chako down, who had resorted to just screaming with explosions and expletives in the background, just so she could get a location. She had no doubt put out an alert for all heroes on patrol to be on the lookout for an explosion villain, not that they would find one. The rest of the group was back at Shouji's house, the closest one, and were no doubt in the backyard "playing" heroes vs villains so Shouji's older sister wouldn't get worried.

They slipped out the door and Kouda rushed them in from the alley he had been hiding in with the birds. He immediately fussed over the bird boy, still upset at the cruelty, and typed something out before shoving the phone at Izuku.

"The birds say he's dying. He needs medical help, and fast."

Izuku nodded and fished Shouji's phone back out, dialing a number he had long since memorized.

It rang once.

“Hi Nedzu!”

“Izuku, are you the cause of this explosion villain alert I’m getting?”

“Hehe, yep! Anyway, is Mr Iguchi still in the building?”

“He is indeed! Would you like me to direct your call?”

“Yes please! Oh, and there isn’t actually a villain, but I will be calling you back later when I have all the facts, and then we’ll have a fun project!”

“How lovely! I look forward to it! Hold a moment, my friend.”

Gentle music played over the phone while they continued to walk before Shuichi picked up the phone.

“Um, hello, this is Iguchi Shuichi…?”

“Mr Iguchi! Are you free right now?”

~~~~~

Recovery Girl and Shuichi met them at Shouji’s house, his older sister letting them in immediately after seeing the badly injured bird boy being brought in by her brother, recognizing the medical bag the medic heroine carried, if not the heroine herself.
~~~~~

Recovery Girl tsked at the passed out boy, looking extremely annoyed and worried.

"And you found this boy where?"

Izuku's eyes were dark. "The Commission," he said flatly.

"What on earth could they have been doing to him, to get it this bad?" She trailed off with a grumble, waving Shuichi over. "Boy, treat his cuts while I look at this wing."

The kids were all gathered, shellshocked and blank faced, watching the examination and careful bandaging of the older boy, slightly older than Shuichi, even. At one point, he stirred and tried to get up in his delirious state, but Recovery Girl was having none of it, pushing him back down.

When he tried to get up again, she gave him a light peck, healing the worst of the bruises around his face and neck, and knocking him right out.

When her apprentice was done, she had already set and bound the wing, sitting back to give the boy a critical eye, even as he was dead to the world.

Kouda spoke up, barely a whisper. "Is he going to live?"

She sighed and nodded. "Yes. I have some concerns, but other than his injuries, he is in peak health. I put his age at somewhere around

seventeen or eighteen, and he's nothing but muscle, lean and mean, as the kids would say. Given another six hours, he would likely be dead, but something tells me he is a little too stubborn for that."

She shook her head and packed up her bag. "Observe him for the next 24 hours, if he wakes up see what information you can get out of him, I already know Nedzu will want to take this one." She cast a critical eye at Izuku. "You are going to tell him, I gather?"

"Already did, Baba."

She snorted. "Not your grandma, brat, but good. If anyone has been looking for a way to tear into the Commission, it's the rat."

He nodded and looked back at the fitfully sleeping bird boy. After the two healers had left, he glanced up at Shouji's sister.

"Um, Tsuno, can we sleep over?"

She snorted. "Make yourself at home, kiddos, as long as your parents approve. If you can't stay, Mezou and I can watch him."

They quickly all whipped out their phones, each one getting approval from their parents (a lot of them were just happy their kids finally had friends, and most of the parents had met the other kids). Shouji dragged out the spare futons and arranged them around the living room, since the bird boy, who they still didn't know the name of, was taking up the couch.

Shouji's older sister nodded at the kids that piled around her living room and meandered off to the kitchen.

“I’m going to keep the kettle on; something tells me this is going to be a long night.”

Hitoshi sighed and curled up in the chair. “I have insomnia, so I’m not sleeping anyway. I’ll take the first shift.”

Kacchan nodded sharply. “If the bird wakes up, get at least one other person up.”

Chako raised her fist. “I’m second shift!”

Izuku pouted. “Then I’ll be third!”

Kouda raised up four fingers with a nod.

Shouji. “I’m probably going to be up all night, but if I do sleep, I’ll go fifth.”

Kacchan huffed. “Guess I’m last shift.”

~~~~~

Turns out, they didn’t need shifts, because it wasn’t an hour later that a thump woke them all up and had them scrambling up from the floor to hear the whimpering of the boy.
~~~~~

Izuku peered down at him, carefully sitting him up to get him off his wing.

“Hey, it’s ok, you’re ok, you’re safe, just sit up slowly, that’s it.”

Tsuno brought a glass of water from the kitchen, setting it on the coffee table the boy had narrowly avoided, and at the sound of it connecting with the glass, his eyes shot opened and locked onto it. Apparently taking it in sufficiently, golden eyes went from person to person, getting wider with each one until he scrambled back, climbing up the couch until he was perched on the back of it.

Izuku held up his hands non-threateningly. “Hey, it’s ok, you’re safe, you’re not there.”

“…And where is here?”

His voice was soft and scratchy, and his eyes briefly flicked to the glass of water before locking back onto Izuku.

Nobody moved.

“We’re in my friend Shouji’s house,” he gestured to the tall and still boy, “where we brought you to treat your wounds. You were really hurt, mister…?”

His pupils thinned a little.

“Hawks.”

Izuku frowned to himself. That wasn't a name, it was a title, a moniker.

"Ok, Hawks, would you like to drink this water? I can't imagine holding that position is helping your wing, and Baba Chiyo would kill me if I let you break it again."

The boy flinched and looked at his bound wing, before the feathers smoothed out from their fluffed up position. His hands relaxed minutely, sharp fingernails (talons, really,) leaving behind puncture wounds in the couch. He turned to his other wing and grasped one of the bent feathers before tugging it out.

Izuku heard Kouda suck in a breath, but the feather came out as easily as breathing. He took the feather between his hands and fiddled with it until it was straightened out again, then tucked it back into place. He did this for a few of the more obvious ones, then just shook out the wing gently, and the rest righted themselves with a buzz.

"It's not broken."

He fingered the bandages binding it closed, and feathers began to slip out, floating in the air until the bandages fell away from lack of support. It seemed like all the straight feathers had flown out, leaving behind only the broken ones, which he set to straightening out, just like before.

He didn't flinch once, even though the feathers were partially streaked with blood from where they had bent and broken.

The more mangled off the feathers got set aside, not rejoining the wing when the feathers slid back into place, but when he was done,

his wings looked fine. You couldn't see much of the blood on the red color of the wings, in the darkness of the night besides, but his hands, you could see it on his hands.

Throughout the entire ordeal, almost ritual, the six kids and one adult had just watched, none of them quite sure what to make of this boy who was almost a man.

If not for the blood on his hands and the bandaged cuts and bruises, he would look like he was in perfect health.

His golden eyes looked back to Izuku, not looking at any of the others.

"Can I go back now?"

They all flinched.

Chako was the one to speak first, sputtering even as sharp eyes turned to her.

"W-why would you want to go back? They were hurting you!"

He shook his head lightly. "They were training me. I would like to go back please."

Kacchan raised an eyebrow. "Training you for what? High pain tolerance?"

“To be a hero.”

Ah, that would explain the name.

“Hawks,” eyes shot back to him, “that wasn’t… That wasn’t training. You could have died if we didn’t get you out of there.”

“They wouldn’t let that happen, unless I really messed up.”

They all exchanged glances. This was not a good start.

Hitoshi stood up and felt the attention immediately on him, but ignored it to approach the tense boy. As soon as he noticed the talons curling back into the couch (man, they would have to get Tsuno a new couch after this, wouldn’t they), he stopped. The boy relaxed minutely.

“Training isn’t supposed to be like that, even for heroes.” Lavender eyes met golden.

“What’s your name?”

“Hawks.”

“No, your name.”

“…Hawks.”

“Your civilian name.”

“…”

Izuku frowned.

“Do you… remember?”

The seventeen or eighteen year old frowned for a moment.

“It wasn’t… it wasn’t important.”

Tsuno spoke up next. “Kid, it’s your *name* , how is that not important?”

“I…”

Shouji folded his many arms and looked at Izuku.

“Call Nedzu now?”

Izuku smiled, but there was no joy behind it.

“Calling Nedzu now.”

Chapter End Notes

I'd like to think as soon as Izuku said "bird mutation" everyone understood where I was going with this, but if not, don't worry, I kept it vague on purpose. Nedzu will be looking into this poor bird boy (honestly the hardest part about writing this is checking ages and lining them up correctly; Spinner is 15-16, Hawks is 17-18 rn, its an interesting time) and this is, technically, the start of dismantling society.

And who knows, looking into the commission might lead to... other children :)

the gang isn't all here yet, that's all I'm saying, we have at least 7 more kids

NAME EXPLANATIONS:
Sanji Chou - both names were taken from the romanji for kanji for "secretary", sanji and choukan
Tsuno - literally means tentacle but like, a snail's eye stalk tentacle. Don't have a quirk or appearance for her, but she's Shouji's older sister by like, at least 13 years and takes care of him out here

A Job Offer and More Digging

Chapter Summary

Hawks learns his name and the gang makes another plan

Chapter Notes

in my notes, the chapter title is "we add a bird to collection, no, this isn't a mafia family why would you think that" because eveery time you guys mention the mob or mafia I cackle

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Hawks (he had a name, he *did*) found himself being led to UA when it was daylight. Barely, it was just dawn, but he was used to being up at this time, and the herd of ten year olds was corralling him to the school.

Sure, he could use his wings and take off, flying back to the Commission and *praying* they accepted his excuse for why he hadn't been in his room when they came to get him, but he had the green kid, Midoriya Izuku, holding his right hand and the explosive blond he hadn't caught the name of holding his left.

Could he take off with them both?

Yes, he was strong.

But something about the blond's expression told him he *might* lose a hand if he tried that, and he really, really did not want to explain to his handler why he had let himself get maimed.

Plus, he had always secretly wanted to go to UA, and he was wondering if the Nedzu these kids seemed to know was the principal.

Seemed ridiculous, but then again, he had passed out in his room and woke up across town, so it was at least possible.

Midoriya walked through the gates first, waving at, yes, that was a camera, and the boundary stayed open. The UA boundary was famous for keeping out anyone who didn't have a pass, and seeing as these kids were not students and Hawks *definitely* wasn't, someone must be keeping it open for them.

Another point in favor of these kids knowing the Nedzu.

The green kid led them through the halls like he knew every inch of them and he waved at the heroes they passed on the way.

Two more points.

Finally, they were outside the principal's office and Hawks had to accept that they really did know Nedzu, someone the Commission would constantly tell him to avoid. Apparently he was a hassle and a rat.

Hawks didn't think they meant he was literally a rat.

"Am I a mouse, a bear, or a dog? Who knows, but I am the principal of UA!"

Ok, maybe not literally a rat. Remained to be seen.

“Thank you for bringing our guest, Izuku.”

“Of course. Hope you don’t mind that all my friends came, we weren’t sure he wouldn’t bolt.”

Nedzu chuckled as Izuku closed the door, leaving just the three of them in the room, and hopped into a well loved chair.

“No problem at all, it was nice to see them! Perhaps after this you might play one of our games with them? I know Love Letter and Insider both play up six players. Most of the others only go up to four or five, sadly, but I also have more games you might want to try, like Evolution! Ah, but I digress, tell me all about our guest; unless, of course, you wish to tell me about yourself?”

Hawks most decidedly did not, but it was better than whatever thing Izuku would spin, so he sighed internally.

“I am Hawks, I’m in training to be a hero. This kid and his friends kidnapped me from where I was being trained.”

He watched the kid still from where he was fiddling with a rubix cube and a green eye twitched.

“Ah, as you are probably aware, this is a hero school, so we know a bit about training heroes. Would you tell me about your training regimen? You are in quite good shape, and we could always do with outside, alternative perspectives.”

That didn’t seem quite right, but his animal facial expressions were hard to read.

“My feathers are detachable and have limited telepathy and sense outreach. I focus on increasing my range, efficiency, duration, and finesse. Then there’s just regular working out, nothing special.”

He didn’t know why he was trying to cover for the Commission. He *hated* the training they put him through, but he really wanted to be a hero and they promised him he would. Hell, he was supposed to debut soon, as long as this whole kidnapping thing blew over without serious repercussions.

“Oh, what sort of workouts?”

He shifted uncomfortably, unconsciously falling out of attention as he avoided the beady black eyes.

“You know, just general ones?”

“That sounds like a question!”

“It’s not.”

“Hmm,” Nedzu sat back in his chair and Hawks felt like he was being picked apart. He understood now why the Commission didn’t like him.

“Do you remember your name, young Hawks?”

He frowned minutely before schooling his face into perfect neutrality. “I don’t see how that’s relevant to my training.”

“It took some digging,” the diminutive principal continued, completely ignoring him, “because the Commission really tried to erase all traces of it, but luckily I am quite good at sniffing out dirty secrets, and they wanted to hide it like one.”

He leaned forward and folded his hands (paws?) on the desk, looking up at him with serious, steady eyes, and a gentle smile.

“Would you like to know it?”

Hawks faltered, the immediate answer of “no” dying on his tongue. He *should* say no, his name wasn’t his any more, he had forgotten it, he was just a hero, he didn’t *deserve it* -

“Yes.”

He blinked in surprise at the answer that came out of his mouth. It was no more than a blurted whisper, but Nedzu’s ear twitched and his smile widened minutely.

“Hello, Keigo Takami! I am Nedzu and this is Izuku; it’s nice to meet you!”

All the tension of the last 12 hours came crashing down on him at once as he tasted the name on his lips and it settled on his shoulders like an old friend.

He collapsed with a sob.

~~~~~

Keigo was, apparently, 17, turning 18 soon, which is when the Commission was planning on having him make his debut. Izuku and Nedzu exchanged a glance and after some intense eye contact, they both nodded.

“Did you know that I technically have more jurisdiction over my employees than the Hero Commission does?”

Keigo crinkled his brow. “I don’t understand.”

“It’s simple, you see: as you may or may not be aware, I have somewhat of a troubled past and am not altogether fond of humans in general, especially ones that hold positions of power over me and those I consider my own, nor people who hurt others.” He smiled in glee. “Hurting others just makes my blood boil, you understand?”

Keigo paled and nodded with a gulp, fiddling with his left wing, the one that not twelve hours ago had been hanging limp.

“As such, the Commission cut me a deal. I imagine they simply wanted me out of the way and distracted with other things so I couldn’t ruin any of their plans, but as part of my leading of this school, the next generation, I was afforded a bit of leeway outside of their control, to incentivise me to stay. Of course, if I went directly against them, all bets would be off and they would no doubt push to have me removed, but all of my public employees are subject to me and me alone, with little oversight from the Hero Commission.”
~~~~~

He chuckled and leaned back in his chair. “If they were to try and interfere with my employees, the public outcry would be swift and terrible, not to mention the legal team at UA would tear them to shreds for breach of contract. You have to hold the government accountable before it becomes so bad that you simply have to tear it down and start over.”

Keigo nodded slowly and Izuku smiled, laying his head down on his arms and looking at the boy eight years his elder.

“…What are you implying?”

Nedzu grinned, all teeth and looking a little feral. “I have recently had a secretary position open up and am in need of a new hire! Are you, perhaps, interested in a job?”

“I-I have no experience being a secretary, why would you even want to hire me?”

Izuku snorted. “Nedzu already told you. You’d be safe.”

Keigo stopped. “…But I have no experience.”

Nedzu smiled and held out the form. “Would it help if I told you I created this job today? In reality, there is not much you would do besides sitting at a desk in the teachers lounge and occasionally reading papers I send down. Oh, you would also be answering the phone, that is usually the job of a secretary.”

“Yep! Nedzu used to answer the phone all the time, it was a hassle, but if you take the job you will be our first line of defense!”

“I hope you aren't shy!”

He shook his head slowly, staring at the job contract he had been handed. “I’m used to talking to people, it comes with the job.”

Nedzu smiled. “Excellent, then you’ll do just fine! Would you like a pen?”

~~~~~

Hitoshi watched as Izuku led the bird boy out of Nedzu’s office and honestly the teenager looked pretty dazed.

Izuku smiled.

“Hello again, may I introduce Keigo Takami, UA’s new secretary?”

They all said hello and Izuku patted the dazed boy on the arm.

“Ok, bye Keigo! See you later!”

Keigo waved, blinking as the group of six ten year olds left UA.

Izuku was humming as he practically skipped down the pavement, but before they got too far, he whirled around to face the group.
~~~~~

“How many other secrets do you think the Commission has?”

Kouda smiled and their phones pinged, the group chat going off. Hitoshi looked at his friend with a smirk.

“Kouda’s right - let’s go find out.”

~~~~~

Todoroki Shouto noticed there were a lot more birds around the compound than there used to be, but Fuyumi said it was just because it was spring.

Shouto wasn’t convinced.

~~~~~

Dabi raised an eyebrow at the crow he had been feeding for the last week.

“I hear your kind is supposed to be smart, so you think you could help me out? I need to make money, and no one wants to hire this patchwork face.”

The crow cocked its head and Dabi liked to imagine it was almost asking about his trouble.

“Tell you what, corvid, you wanna hear a story? I know I always enjoy eating more when I have something to occupy me. You might not know all the stuff about humans or whatever, but I bet even a bird like you has heard of the number two hero, Endeavor, huh? Well, I know him too, probably a bit more than most. You see, he’s my shitty dad…”

~~~~~

Kouda nodded at the crow, Konosuba as it told him the story. He immediately whipped out his phone.

Anima: I have a scoop.

Greenbean: HC or stray?

Anima: maybe both

Anima: there’s certainly a scandal here

Explodey: jesus fuck please tell me we’re not adopting anymore sad bois

Explodey: cheeks did you change my name AGAIN

GravityGirl: yeh hehehehe XD

GravityGirl: anyway kouda!!!! Give us the scoop!

Octopus: what’s the sitch
~~~~~

Anima: suba got back from talking to smokey purple boy

Anima: still haven't figured out who it is and suba has a vague idea where he hangs out but

Anima: apparently he told the crow a story

Insomnya: he talked to the 🐦‍⬛?

Anima: he's been feeding suba for a while and desperate people do desperate things

Anima: we talked to the cats all the time

Insomnya: valid

Anima: he was talking about his dad

Anima: who is, apparently the number two hero, endeavor

Greenbean: wait what??? I thought he had like, three kids

Greenbean: and none of them are smoky OR purple

Greenbean: pretty sure his youngest, Shouto, is the only one with a fire quirk

Anima: like I said, scandal AND stray

Anima: honestly if we can get to this guy, we could get the full story, but from what suba got

Anima: its bad, really really bad

Anima: like, keigo bad

Octopus: ah, so they have chosen death

GravityGirl: wiat y is this a scandal???

Greenbean: secret child who's probably Todoroki Touya, presumed dead 5 years ago, living on the streets

Greenbean: unless any of you have heard of this before and didnt tell me about the secret fourth child, this is definitely a cover up

Explodey: jesus christ you had like three details and half a minute and you already found this guy's identity?

Greenbean: no I *probably* found his identity

Greenbean: I don't see a reason why he would lie to a crow but like

Greenbean: not many people would claim to be endeavor's son, let alone his supposedly dead one

Insomnya: can I be presumed dead pls

Insomnya: sounds fun

Explodey: literally shut the fuck up, eyebags, if you need a fake death, just ask, you know zuku has at least 3 plans running at any given time in case the commission decides to check their fucking cameras

Greenbean: I don't have 3 plans!!!!!!

Explodey: my bad, 4

Greenbean: >:(

GravityGirl: don't worry, Midori! I have a plan for faking at least 1 person's death too!

Greenbean: :)

Octopus: ok that's cool and all, happy for you guys

Octopus: but touya

Octopus: the todorokis

Octopus: plan?

Anima: I've increased security on the todoroki household to see if this lackluster and dangerous training didn't stop with one dead kid

Insomnya: but he isn't actually dead

Anima: pretty sure no one actually knows that but us and touya

Greenbean: can suba guide me to his location?

Anima: sure, are you bringing anyone else?

Greenbean: anyone want to talk to another 18 year old and try and convict his dad for murder, domestic abuse, and child endangerment?

Insomnya: I'll go, he sounds like a vibe

Insomnya: also I need you to not scare him off by threatening to murder his dad

Greenbean: getting him arrested is not murder

Insomnya: yeah, we all know that was pretext for you murdering the number two, just saying

Explodey: fucker reminds me of me before…

Explodey: well, you know

Explodey: rubs me the wrong fucking way

GravityGirl: hey, I'll come too!! I was on distraction last time, and while that was fun, I want to be IN it! :DDD

Greenbean: ok! Kouda, what time does he usually meet and feed Konosuba?

Anima: twice, 10 am and 5 pm

Greenbean: ok! Basic area?

Anima: sounds like an hour away by train, two by walking

Greenbean: Ok!!!! Toshi, chako, meet you at toshi and kouda's station at 3:30 pm sharp! Don't be late!

GravityGirl: ok! :)

Insomnya: sure

Explodey: can't believe we're just gonna adopt every single fucker with problems in this goddamn country

Explodey: what's next, a fucking vampire or something?

Octopus: not sure if those are real, but I suppose anything is possible with quirks

GravityGirl: Oh! Aren't vampires usually supposed to be hot??? Hell yes, gimme a vampire next!

Insomnya: we're ten??

GravityGirl: sorry I have a goal in life

Octopus: I'm more concerned that she's looking forward to meeting what is usually known as a bloodsucking monster that will kill you

Explodey: cheeks why are you like this

GravityGirl: it's a talent~ <3

Greenbean: I'm gonna go finish my work for today, but I'll see you guys at 3:30! Keep me updated if we find any more evidence!

Chapter End Notes

I have a discord server if you wanna join and talk about the fics so yall stop meeting me in other servers and freaking out, should be in the end end notes

A Secretary is not a Chicken

Chapter Summary

dabi gets a surprise and hawks gets irritated

Chapter Notes

I just love these dorks so much

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Dabi was already not having a great day. Sure, he had seen his best friend this morning (disregard said best friend was a bird, that's not important), but he had almost gotten caught when doing his regular minor (major) shoplifting. Luckily, he hadn't survived five years on the street by being slow, so he was able to run before the cops could catch him, but he had dropped some of his hard earned (stolen) food and now he would have to try and get more tomorrow.

It was a shitty day to be homeless.

At least it wasn't raining, because those days were always the worst - needing to find shelter, said shelter being musty as hell, food would go bad faster, and his clothes and more importantly socks would invariably get wet.

So yeah, at least it wasn't raining.

He trudged to the spot he usually hung out with his buddy, twirling the saltines packet between his fingers. He hadn't really named the crow, since that felt a little rude and he knew he wasn't the best at names. I mean, he had named himself "cremation" so he wasn't exactly a paragon of creativity.

The crow was waiting for him and cawed to greet him, like usual.

“Yeah, yeah, you’re hungry, I brought you some crackers, chill, my guy.”

“Are you Todoroki Touya?”

He would later claim that he did *not* scream, but when a small child comes out of nowhere and calls you by your literal dead name (he was dead, it made sense in his head) out of the blue, you would have to be a weirdo to not jump three feet into the air and scream like a little girl.

“What the fuck?!”

The kid was tiny and green, Dabi noted, with really wide and sparkling eyes.

“Are you Todoroki Touya?”

Another kid, taller and purple, sighed from behind the kid. “Izuku I thought we agreed we weren’t going to immediately open with that question.”

“But Hitoshi, what else was I supposed to start with? Hi, I’m here to take down your father and the commission? You know that crow you’ve been befriending for the past several weeks, yeah, that’s a spy for one of my friends?”

“You aren’t helping.”

The green kid sighed and turned back to Dabi, who was still plastered against the wall from where he had scrambled back from these children that had appeared out of nowhere.

The squirt held out his hand. “Hi, I’m Midoriya Izuku!”

Dabi blinked at the kid and then glared at the crow. “You turned me in to these kids? What the heck, man, I thought we were friends!”

Izuku's eyes widened. “Oh, no, Suba is still your friend, he was just worried, that’s why he told us your life story!”

The purple kid smacked himself in the face.

“You… you what?!”

Izuku frowned. “Hmm, not working, ok, let’s start over, hi, I’m-”

“Midoriya Izuku, yeah, I know, now what the hell did you mean when you said you wanted to take down my father and the commission? Does that mean the Hero Commission? Also, do you *know* who my father is?”

Izuku smiled, all bright and sunshine. “Yes and yes! They’ve both hurt a lot of people, and they both need to be taken down! We have a bird guard on your family-”

“He means we have more bird spies watching the main Todoroki household.”

“-and with your testimony and my connections, we can definitely get Endeavor arrested! Finding more evidence against the Hero Commission is honestly just a bonus at this point!”

Dabi blinked. “You’re like four, what connections could you possibly have to take down both the number two and the government?”

Izuku pouted and the girl (since when was there a girl???) giggled.

“I’m ten, thank you very much! And you should come with us, you can meet my connections!”

Dabi weighed his options. On one hand, these were literal children.

On the other hand, they knew a lot they shouldn’t have.

“I could be a murderer, are you sure you want me to go with you guys?”

“Konosuba would never hang out with a murderer!”

Dabi looked at the crow in question. “I’m still mad at you.”

The crow crooned and flapped over to perch on his shoulder and preen his hair and Dabi sighed. “Fine, whatever, I forgive you, but

only if this pans out and I can get an actual meal out of it."

Izuku smiled again and Dabi squinted.

"Great! Follow us!"

~~~~~

Keigo was having a great time being the secretary for UA. He had a few numbers (like the Hero Commission's) written down on a piece of paper, and if one of them called, he got to do everything in his power to make them stop calling.

"Joe's Crack Shack, we deal it, you feel it, how can I help you?"

"Welcome to phhhizza… hhhhut. Let me guess, pi-"

"Hello caller, you're on the air!"

"Thank you for calling Comcast, how can I help you?"

"119, what's your emergency?"

"District Morgue, what's your body?"

"Larry's Taxidermy, you snuff em, we stuff em!"
~~~~~

“No, this is Patrick.”

"Thank you for calling Boothworld industries, your number has been logged and traced and you've been scheduled for remodeling."

"Hello, this is the people with AIDS hotline, how may I help you?"

“Janet, I swear, if you call one more time, I will burn your house down!”

Or, his personally favorite, heavy breathing and/or straight up screaming into the receiver.

He loved this damn job.

Occasionally, of course, he’d have to *actually* answer the phone, but that was pretty easy, he would either direct the calls to someone if it seemed actually important, or he would take down a name, number, and message and relay it to someone later. Did he have experience? No, but he just acted like how he had been taught to deal with fans, maybe throwing in some vapidness because it was fun.

If he wanted to act like a ditz, he would. It made people underestimate him anyway.

He saw the door open just as the phone rang, catching his attention, and he rolled his eyes. Commission, again.

“You’ve reached the home office of Bear Grylls, it seems you aren’t subscribed to our mailing letter, would you like to-”

They hung up and he sighed in satisfaction. He looked up at who came in.

He blinked.

“Hi Keigo!”

He tore his eyes away from the newcomer to look at the green bean with two of his friends, the gravity girl and the purple kid who really looked like he needed sleep.

“Hey, Zuks, who’s this?”

“This is-”

“Dabi.”

Keigo smiled and raised both eyebrows, sliding his hands together. “Ok, so that’s a fake name, nice to meet you Dabi, what brings you to my office?”

Shinsou snorted (brat). “This is literally the teacher’s lounge.”

“Nope, it’s the secretary’s office. The fact that it’s in the teacher’s lounge is frankly, irrelevant.”

Dabi looked him up and down. “What’s a kid like you doing as the secretary of UA?”

Keigo felt his wings puff up in indignation. “Excuse me? I’m probably older than you are!”

“Oh yeah, and how old would that be, birdy?”

“I’m turning eighteen soon.”

Dabi smirked. “Shame, seeing as I’m already eighteen. Guess I beat you on this one, huh?”

Keigo ignored the (only slightly) older boy and turned back to his kidnapper. “Zuks, why did you bring this burnt bagel in here?”

The boy straightened, but Izuku just giggled. “Taking him to see Nedzu! More stuff to take down the Commission with!”

Keigo smirked. “Hell yeah, nice job, kiddo. Can you tell him I’m going to go get some chicken nuggets from the cafeteria?”

The burnt boy snickered. “Chicken? Isn’t that cannibalism?”

Keigo was getting a little mad at this boy’s infuriating smirk. “Do these wings looks like a chicken to you, motherf-”

“Woah, chill, birdy, there’s kids in here.”

Uraraka snorted. “Nah, we’ve heard it all from Blasty, fire away, Kei!”

He stood, straightening himself to his full height (dammit, Dabi was still taller) and spread his wings a little.

“I’m a hawk, bitch, hawks eat other birds all the time. Zuks, you want anything from Lunch Rush?”

“Oh, I kind of want something orange flavored, actually.”

“Birdy, get me some soba, I’m hungry.”

“Didn’t ask you, *Dabi* .”

The older boy just chuckled as Keigo stalked out of the room, grumbling to himself.

If he asked for a bowl of soba while he was there, it certainly wasn’t for that infuriating boy.

~~~~~

Nedzu steepled his paws as much as he could, what with them being so small, and he grinned.
~~~~~

Izuku felt Dabi shift nervously beside him, but he just grinned back at his friend. They had already briefed Nedzu on the stuff Konosuba remembered, so he had a basic idea of what he was about to hear, but this was technically a first hand account, and neither of them were keen to let it pass.

"Well, Dabi, was it? Come sit for some tea, if you'd like. I imagine we have a lot to talk about. Izuku, would you and your friends like to go play?"

Izuku nodded. "Send him to us when you're done? He can play too!"

Nedzu smiled. "Of course, Izuku!"

Izuku grinned and bounded out to where Hitoshi and Chako were waiting for him, heading back to the teachers' lounge - he meant, the secretary office.

Keigo walked in just as they did and tossed a bun to Izuku. He looked at it, then shrugged and took a bite.

It was like an orange creamsicle custard bun!

He grinned at the bird boy in thanks and bounded over to the table, taking two decks of cards out of his pocket.

"Keigo! Call Mr Iguchi down and come play with us!"

Hawks shrugged and picked up the phone, hitting the button for the

intercom with a smirk.

His face lit up and he used his most sugary voice. “Mr. Igu~chi, you’ve been requested in the teachers’ lounge, Mr. Igu~chi!”

He set the phone back down, barely suppressing his laughter. He wiped a tear from his eye and plopped down at the table, immediately sprawling out with terrible posture.

“So, what are we playing?”

Izuku giggled and shuffled the two decks together, leaving out the jokers.

“BS!”

Hitoshi groaned and plopped his head on the table. “Izuku, we do not need to play against you in a game about lying and counting cards.”

Chako snorted. “I believe we can take him.”

The lizard man walked in, saw Izuku, paled, and turned around to walk out.

“Mr Iguchi! Come play!”

He groaned and reluctantly turned back around, slowly sitting down next to Hitoshi.

“What terrible game are we playing today?”

Keigo leaned back, grinning, unaware of the danger he was in. “Bullshit. Ever played before?”

He sighed. “Unfortunately.”

They played a few normal rounds, pretty basic, Izuku winning most of them, when Dabi came out of the office, looking a little shell shocked.

Izuku waved him down. “Come play BS with us! Keigo doesn’t really know what he's doing, so you’ll be fine!”

“Hey!”

Dabi looked to Keigo’s desk and saw the soba.

His eyes widened and he grinned. “Aw, birdy, you shouldn’t have!”

“Shut up, he had extra and you look like a starving rat.”

“I'm flattered.” Dabi grabbed the bowl and sat down next to the bird, obnoxiously slurping his noodles directly in his ear.

“But anyway, it’s been ages, remind me how you play?”

Izuku smiled. “So, I’m going to deal all the cards out to everyone, and then we start with one person and aces. You put down a number of cards, facedown, and claim them to be that number and whatever you were supposed to lay down. For example, I say three aces and lay down three cards, and Hitoshi would go next laying down some cards and declaring twos. If someone doesn’t believe you put down what you said, they call BS and they get revealed. If they were right, you take the entire pile of cards, but if you were telling the truth, they take the pile instead. The winner is the first person to have no cards.”

“Oh,” Dabi muttered, “so if you don't have the cards you just lie and pretend you had the cards.”

“Yep!”

“Got it, who’s going first?”

Izuku dealt out the cards and invited Dabi to start.

“Two aces.”

Keigo put down “two twos” and Izuku put down three threes, grinning all the while, looking the perfect picture of innocence with his big green eyes and bright smile.

Hitoshi narrowed his eyes at Izuku, but shrugged and put down five fours.

“Bullshit,” Dabi scoffed, “there aren’t five fours in a deck.”

Hitoshi raised an eyebrow. “Um, dude, we’re playing with two decks.”

Dabi paused, but shook his head. “Nah, I don’t think you have five fours anyway, there are six of us, no way, bullshit.”

The younger boy shrugged and flipped up the last five cards, revealing them to be all fours.

Dabi stared, then grumbled and swept the cards into his hand.

“Oh, by the way,” Izuku said, "if you want to get immediate satisfaction from lying and getting away with it, once the next person goes, you can say “peanut butter.” For example, none of the cards I put down were threes, so, peanut butter.”

Hitoshi gave a big sigh. “This is why everyone is terrified of you, Izuku.”

He blinked. “Me?”

Yeah, Dabi didn’t see it. This kid? Sure, he had scared the shit out of him earlier today, but that had nothing to do with it, the kid merely had the element of surprise and brought up a past no one but a crow was supposed to know about. Said crow had left them when they got closer to UA, apparently going off to find their spymaster (why did ten year olds have a spymaster).

But yeah, other than that, no way this kid was terrifying. Nedzu was

a little scary, but this kid was harmless.

Dabi would soon come to regret that thought when Izuku successfully called out his every bullshit and got away with so much, winning rounds handedly.

This kid was terrifying.

~~~~~~

Anima: have a confusing report tbh

Explodey: is it on the rest of the endeavor kids

Anima: no this is new

Anima: something has been hunting and eating my birds

Explodey: so there's a dog or a cat on the loose, who cares

Anima: no this isn't an animal

Explodey: no way this isn't a wild animal, they're birds, they get eaten

Anima: [image.jpg]
~~~~~~

Explodey: what the fuck happened to that bird, it's not even eaten, it's just bloody

Explodey: fuck kinda animal does that

Anima: again, not an animal. This is a person

Explodey: that's fucked

Explodey: @Greenbean get over here

Greenbean: oh huh

Greenbean: why is a person attacking the birds?

Anima: it's not a targeted attack, btw, apparently it's all over the place

Greenbean: can you get me locations?

Anima: gimme a sec

Anima: [map.jpg]

Octopus: is it just me or is that in like, a path

Greenbean: not just you

Greenbean: the person is travelling somewhere

Greenbean: ok, running the math, they should be nearby in four days

Explodey: we are *not* going towards the crazy bird sucker

Explodey: I *will* tell auntie

GravityGirl: do the birds no what we're looking for???

GravityGirl: know*

Anima: crazy, blonde, some red

Greenbean: kacchan have you been attacking birds

Explodey: fuck off

Insomnya: wait so are we

Insomnya: actually

Insomnya: going after the bird sucker

Insomnya: pls say no

Greenbean: I think we should at least check it out!

Greenbean: we care about the birds!

Greenbean: they are our main source of information and have already given us two great leads!

Greenbean: plus it makes me sad to see them dying :)

Anima: not one for confrontation but I will accost this monster if I see

them in real life

GravityGirl: might be a weird quirk thing!!!

GravityGirl: but if they're chasing birds, can't we like, lure them in using a bird?

Greenbean: I don't want to put more birds at risk >-<

Explodey: are we really fucking doing this???? really?????????

Greenbean: you don;t have to come if you don't want to

Explodey: oh I'm going

Explodey: don't want to have to explain to auntie why you got mauled by a bird sucker

Explodey: WAIT A GODDAMN MINUTE

Insomnya: what now

Explodey: I FUCKING CALLED IT

Explodey: VAMPIRE, BITCHES

Explodey: HAHAHAHHAHAHA, GET FUCKED, I CALLED THIS SHIT

Explodey: BUT GODDAMMIT WHY DO I ALWAYS HAVE TO BE RIGHT

GravityGirl: 😳

Greenbean: oh! That makes sense! Based on the amount of birds, whoever it is needs quite a bit of blood, or at least they aren't getting any other sustenance.

Greenbean: seems like we also don't have them eating any people, or we would have heard about it on the news

Greenbean: I can't wait to meet them!

Explodey: why are you such a dumbass

Greenbean: ???

Explodey: "oh, a vampire??? Cool!!!! Let's meet the blood sucking creature of the night! Great idea!!!!!"

Octopus: that's honestly fair

Octopus: this seems like something to call the authorities on

Greenbean: can't be worse than breaking into the HC

Explodey: it definitely can

Greenbean: oh well, we have four days to plan!

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Explodey: Cheeks she's *just* your type

GravityGirl: wait what's my type?

Explodey: batshit

GravityGirl: rude

GravityGirl: I'm coming over >:)

Explodey: fine but if you die i'm not explaining it to your parents

GravityGirl: deal!!!

GravityGirl: sys!

Chapter End Notes

everyone who said toga, guess who ya gonna see next time????

that's right, Todoroki Shouto!

have been looking forward to BS with the "adults" aka the teenagers, because they enjoy it. Dabi is gonna do great at his new job that is janitorial work. Keigo can and will mock him for it.

Speaking of the bird, him being like a teenage girl on the phone and just being an airhead (as an act, of course) is an hilarious image I need to put in everyone's heads. Like, its a serious business call and he's just painting his nails and flipping through a magazine. "OMG, really???" It's perfect.

Also, Suba is a perfect bird! His name comes from the kanji for uhhhh, this stuff.

That's the kanji site I use and I love Suba with my whole heart

A Vampire and a Party

Chapter Summary

you wanted her, you got her

Chapter Notes

I love her a lot, thanks for coming to me ted talk

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Himiko wasn't entirely sure how she got here, if she was being entirely honest…

She had been chasing a bird when she was tackled to the ground, and it was pretty hazy since she was just *really hungry* but then something was waved in her face and it smelled *so good* and she latched onto it and devoured it. She had been upset that it was gone so quickly, cursing herself for not being able to hold back, but then there was another one! This one she took her time on, savoring every bloody bite. It was nice, the outside was just cooked but the inside was still pretty purple and just full of *delicious* blood, it was amazing!

Then her eyes had cleared and she saw the three boys.

The biggest one had many arms and a mask covering his neck and mouth, and his many arms were folded. He looked defensive, she hoped he wasn't mad at her for the birds.

The next one was blond, like her, but he had red eyes and was glaring always. He was taller than her, which wasn't hard since she didn't eat a lot. Even though he was glaring, Himiko didn't think he was going to attack her, he was just annoyed.

The other one was really tiny and cute and green! Himiko personally

thought he looked like a bush, but he had been the one to give her the food, so she automatically liked him.

She wasn't really able to pay attention to what the bush was saying, but he promised her more food so she was more than happy to follow them. She only looked at the birds a few times on the journey; really, she felt much better after the snack the bush had given her, but she was still hungry.

There was a small grandma and a lizard boy who looked only a little older than she was, and then the grandma handed her a pouch.

It was blood!!!

Himiko closed her eyes at the first taste, letting it wash over her, and she sighed internally. She wanted to suck it up all at once, but she didn't know when she'd get more blood, so best to savor it. Drinking blood was weird and wrong, after all. These people were just… also weird. But not wrong, they couldn't be wrong, they were so nice to Himiko.

Two more blood packets later, Himiko was full and sitting on the edge of a bed, still no clue how she had gotten there, but the nice grandma was looking her over and clicking her tongue.

"Dearie, when was the last time you actually ate?"

She hummed. "The bush gave me some snacks!"

The grandma paused before glancing over at the bush in realization. "Ah. And before that?"

Himiko thought and thought and thought, but she really couldn't remember. Things had been hazy for the last… what was the date?

Oh, she was eleven now! That was fun.

The nice granny gave her some gummies and Himiko found she liked them. Not as much as blood, but they were sweet.

Then a little mouse person came down to say hello and he brought a big man with like, tusks! He was all red and silver and had these yellow glasses on, and apparently his name was Mr. Kan! He had a blood quirk just like Himiko!

The next person to come in was a cutie named Uraraka Ochako. Even her name was cute! Himiko smiled and waved at her. She was pink and brown and Himiko hoped she could see her again. She looked like fun!

According to Nedzu, the little mouse person, Mr. Kan would be taking care of her for a while until they could find her parents. She wasn't super happy about that, and the bush seemed to notice, because he asked her if her parents were mean.

She felt bad for crying, but thinking about her parents reminded her that she was a monster.

Then the lizard boy knelt next to her.

"Am I a monster?"

She was confused. He was just a lizard man, why would that make him a monster?

“People called me a monster too.”

What? But he was so nice!

“And you are nice too. You aren’t a monster just because of your quirk.”

Oh no, she was crying again.

The grandma gave her a juice box. It wasn’t blood, because she was full and something about getting her appetite back, but it was apple juice, so it was still really tasty and sweet.

Himiko was glad she had followed the bush, the tall boy, and the angry one.

For the first time in months, she could think clearly.

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Izuku was glad Himiko had seemed better after getting some actual food in her, and that Vlad King was willing to take her in due to their similar quirks. Luckily, Recovery Girl had some blood on hand that they could feed her, since the meat they had barely cooked wasn’t
~~~~~

actual blood, no matter how fresh it was.

Chako was very excited to have another girl in the group (“No, it’s not because she’s a vampire!”) and immediately hounded the teacher into arranging playdates. Technically, since she was a ward and under hero watch due to her abuse (there was nothing else they could call what her parents had done to her, and Izuku had a feeling they had barely scratched the surface) she couldn’t leave the house, but she could have visitors, so Chako had volunteered to be her in to the normal, outside world.

Izuku had high hopes for her, she seemed really nice! Even Kouda was willing to forgive her as long as she stopped eating the birds, so, progress!

Her twelfth birthday was coming up soon, in August. She had been out on the streets for almost a full year, in a haze of starving bloodlust.

Izuku was really glad he had gotten her last name, because he had some people to send the police after!

(It was that or resort to murder, but he had a feeling that even if he didn’t get caught, which he wouldn’t, at least three of his friends would be disappointed in him.)

Today, he and Nedzu had been invited to a party! Actually, they were allowed to bring guests, so Izuku decided to bring Kacchan and Hitoshi, Kacchan because he was still sulking that they went after Himiko, and Hitoshi because he needed to get out more.

Plus, he was fun to hang out with!

Nedzu met them at the station and they all took the train together until they were outside their destination, what looked like just a regular office building.

Probably for the best, since this was a party for the number one hero. Less attention they attracted, the better.

There was a 16 year old girl at the desk and she grinned.

“Hi, Principal Nedzu!”

“Hello, Awata! Izuku, this is Awata Kaoruko, a third year at UA and Sir Nighteye’s intern!”

Izuku beamed at the blue skinned woman. “Hi! I’m Izuku! These are my friends Kacchan and Hitoshi!”

She chuckled. “Yeah, I think I’ve seen you and some of your buds in the halls! Here for the party? Third floor, you can’t miss it.”

Izuku paused. “Are you gonna go?”

She smiled. “Yeah, I will, just gotta man the front for half of it until Centipeder can take over. Can’t just let anyone walk in, you know?”

He grinned. “Makes sense! See you later, Awata!”

She waved as they got in the elevator, Hitoshi pressing the button for the third floor. It dinged as they reached their floor and Izuku was bouncing up and down. It had been a couple of months since he had last seen Nighteye and All Might, or Toshinori, as the man insisted on being called after their third visit, and he was excited to see them both!

It really was impossible to miss, since the door was surrounded by balloons and streamers, all in the red, white, blue, and gold, the traditional All Might colors.

Inside, it was filled with people, most of whom Izuku didn't recognize, actually, including a detective who was smiling and talking to Toshinori, and a short old man who was hovering around the food table, eating all the sweets and throwing popcorn at Toshinori's head.

The man didn't seem to notice, but someone across the room seemed to be keeping a tally of how many popcorn could bounce off before he did. It was currently in the thirties.

Izuku bounded over to the hero, completely ignoring the fact that Nedzu had split off and his two friends were frozen in the doorway (oops, he forgot to warn them, didn't he?), and grinned up at the man.

"Toshinori!"

The man laughed and picked him up, swinging him around. "Young Izuku! I am glad you could make it! I have no doubt that this is all due to your influence!"

Nighteye snorted and muttered something about puppy eyes under his breath, but neither of them heard him.

“I see you brought friends?”

Izuku grinned as he was set down and tugged the pro over to his still wide eyed friends. “Yep, this is Kacchan and Hitoshi! Kacchan, Hitoshi, this is Yagi Toshinori! Or, you know, All Might.”

Slowly, Kacchan turned to him.

“Izuku.”

“Yes?”

“What the fuck.”

All Might looked taken aback at the ten year old’s language, but Hitoshi piped up next. “So was anyone gonna tell me you knew All Might personally or was I just supposed to find that out myself? How long have you known him to know his name?”

“Um, since I was eight? Yeah, it’s almost two years now, huh.”

Kacchan nodded. “Ok, since I can’t scream right now, I’m going to stuff my face with food.”

Hitoshi just shook his head and went back to staring at the symbol of peace with narrowed eyes.

“So how did you meet Izuku anyway?”

Yagi scratched the back of his head sheepishly. “I was… I was being reckless, and he helped me see that.”

“What the fuck is with this cake?!”

Izuku meandered over to Kacchan who looked irritated. The sheet cake in question looked like a regular gender reveal cake except instead of saying “it’s a boy!” or “it’s a girl!” it said “It’s a Lung!”

The old man barked out a laugh. “Learn to appreciate humor, brat. The idiot is, as of last week, with all of his organs.”

Toshinori chuckled nervously, edging away from the old man. “Gran is correct, I am completely whole and ready to go back into hero work.”

Kacchan looked aghast. “Your vacation was because you had lost a *lung* ?!”

“And his stomach!” Izuku piped up.

“Yes,” All Might sighed, “and it has been a long two years in recovery, but I am finally ready to get back to work!”

“After two months of light hero work to make sure you’re actually ok and you don’t get yourself on the edge of death again.” Gran didn’t even look at him, merely taking another bite of the dango he had

picked up.

“Erm, y-yes, I won’t be quite as up to my regular levels for a while, but I will be back in action! It’s better than retiring due to my injuries, after all.”

Izuku beamed. “Yep! You look way better than you did two years ago! Kacchan, check this out, doesn’t he look so sick?”

He whipped out his phone and opened the picture he had taken of Toshinori in his hospital bed looking sheepish and giggled and the dumbfounded expression on his friend’s face.

Gran snorted. “I like this kid. Izuku, right?”

“Yep!”

“Sorahiko. Here’s my number, send me that picture.”

“Ok, Mr. Sora!”

All Might looked ready to pass out, seeing the two of them interacting.

And the party had only just started.

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Dabi : this is little green's spymaster, right?

Dabi : the one the crow snitched to

? : Suba says he's sorry but also not really

? : but yes, this is the "spymaster"

Dabi : I hear you have birds on my siblings

Spymaster : and?

Dabi : are they

Dabi : are they doing ok?

Spymaster : in general, yes

Spymaster : Izuku is probably planning on finding a way to pass messages and get them to meet up with us so we can get their statements and get this show on the road

Spymaster : but they rarely leave the compound so we have to carefully plan this

Spymaster : anything else?

Dabi : …

Dabi : can you pass a note for me

Spymaster : I'll do you one better

Spymaster : I can pass your number

Spymaster : then as long as they have access to phones they can talk to you as much as you want

Dabi : really?

Dabi : you'd do that?

Spymaster : Konosuba speaks highly of you

Spymaster : provide him with a snack and you have a deal

Dabi : done and done

Dabi : I guess I'll give the paper to him?

Spymaster : sure

Dabi : … thanks

Dabi : you're pretty good, for a brat

Spymaster : thanks, I think

~~~~~

? : is this a joke

Dabi : depends

Dabi : is this about the birds
~~~~~

? : prove it's really you

Dabi : ran away when I was 13

Dabi : dyed my hair

Dabi : Yumi wanted to be a teacher last time I checked but idk if that's changed

Dabi : she's icy, literally, she has a frost quirk

Dabi : pretty sure natsu is gonna grow up to be taller than me and I hate it

Dabi : he's quirkless, like little green

Dabi : uh, ignore that last one, you don't know him

Dabi : and Shou

Dabi : well, shou doesn't really like talking to people or emoting, but when he smiles it reminded me why I stayed

Dabi : I guess I left after he stopped smiling

Dabi : because of

Dabi : well

Dabi : dear old dad

Dabi : is that enough or…?

? : Touya?

? : it's really you?

Dabi : I mean

Dabi : unless the family became a lot more open than when I left and

suddenly all that information is public knowledge

Dabi : then yeah

? : this is fuyumi

Yumi : and I'm going to *kill* you

Dabi : thanks!

Dabi : I already tried tho, didn't take

Dabi : now I'm just kinda purple

Yumi : but you're ok?

Yumi : why didn't you contact us before now, you jackass!

Yumi : we thought you were dead!

Dabi : legally I am

Dabi : have a fake name and everything

Dabi : let me tell you, living on the streets?

Dabi : 0/10, would not recommend

Yumi : answer the damn question, touya

Dabi : yeah, I'm ok

Dabi : little green found me

Dabi : well, no, the birds found me and *snitched* to little green and his spymaster

Dabi : but eh

Dabi : same difference

Dabi : what about you guys?

Dabi : how are Shou and mom?

Yumi : touya…

Yumi : mom got sent to the hospital

Dabi : what?

Dabi : why?!

Yumi : she burned shouto with hot water

Dabi : that bastard pushed her too far

Dabi : which hospital is she in

Yumi : [mom.map]

Dabi : ok i can go visit her soon

Dabi : what about everyone else

Yumi : natsu is angry all the time, shou is quiet and withdrawn, and dad is

Yumi : well, you know

Dabi : I do

Dabi : we're working on it

Yumi : we? You and little green?

Dabi : yeah, we'll go with that

Dabi : but trust the birds, they belong to us anyway

Yumi : you sound like shouto

Dabi : wdym

Yumi : "the birds work for the bourgeoisie"

Dabi : lmao

Dabi : we're directly opposed to the government

Yumi : did you join an anarchist gang???

Dabi : no

Dabi : but i mean apparently we're planning on taking down dear old dad

Dabi : so we aren't pro government

Yumi : I have many concerns

Yumi : the first time I hear from you in five years and I hear you're taking down society

Yumi : only you, touya

Dabi : thank you, I try

Dabi : so how have you been?

Yumi : busy

Yumi : when mom left I became the woman of the house, I guess

Dabi : how old were you when this happened

Yumi : 14

Dabi : quick question wtf

Yumi : it's fine I've had three years to get it right

Yumi : I'm much better at cooking

Dabi : yeah that's not great

Dabi : we can probably use that for the case tho

Yumi : are we

Yumi : are we really doing this?

Dabi : going against enji?

Dabi : yes

Yumi : but…

Yumi : where will we go

Dabi : technically I am a legal adult

Dabi : but also currently I'm technically a ward of UA

Yumi : wait what

Yumi : how?

Dabi : little green has connections and brought me right to nedzu

Yumi : who is little green?

Dabi : he's shouto's age, actually, pretty crazy

Dabi : also we have a birdy working as the secretary

Dabi : he's pretty cute

Dabi : keep in mind this is an actual person with wings and not an actual bird like the ones who are spying on you always

Yumi : so its a person with a bird quirk

Dabi : yes

Yumi : and he's cute?

Dabi : when did I say that

Yumi : scroll up

Dabi : oh

Dabi : its fine you'll never meet him

Yumi : so you think he's cute, huh?

Dabi : stop

Yumi : no you left for five years you get to deal with this now

Dabi : he's easy to annoy

Yumi : and you like that in a boy?

Dabi : no I cannot talk about this with my kid sister

Yumi : what color is his hair? Black, brown, red?

Dabi : he’s blond but I don’t see how that matters

Yumi : what type of bird is he? Animal quirks are usually based on a specific animal

Dabi : idk his wings are bright red but he calls himself a hawk

Yumi : oh, a predator?

Yumi : kinky

Dabi : please stop

Yumi : again, maybe don’t leave for five years

Dabi : let me die

Dabi : I will burn myself again

Yumi : wait till I’m there and then I can help you with my frost

Yumi : also so I can meet this boy :)

Yumi : what’s his name

Dabi : no, nope, not doing this

Dabi : i checked that you’re alive and you know I’m alive

Dabi : that’s enough out of me, I’ll give you updates on the dad situation when I know more

Dabi : say hi to the others for me

Yumi : there is no escape, touya

Dabi : yes there is, I just won't respond

Yumi : love you too :3

Dabi : die

Dabi : ...but I love you guys too

Chapter End Notes

dabi would absolutely name people things in his contacts, and kouda will forever be the spymaster

hope you liked all the memes, I sure did, speaking of, I get some in the discord (got one for tlt that I forgot to put up but will next time)

A Tour and an Endeavor in Journalism

Chapter Summary

read the tin

Chapter Notes

yeah its a pun

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Shouto wasn't entirely certain what was going on, to be entirely honest with himself and the world. On paper, yes, he knew *what* was happening, but he didn't know *why* .

The "what" was pretty easy to articulate. They had gotten sent an email about how UA was offering them a free tour, since not only was Endeavor an alumni, but he was a donating alumni, and he had someone who was looking to apply to high schools soon.

Natsuo didn't look enthused, but Fuyumi had looked incredibly excited, so both brothers had agreed to go.

Endeavor couldn't make it, he had business to take care of, but Nedzu, the principal, said that his children could be met at the gate by a member of the staff, all trained heroes, and would be perfectly safe on UA grounds.

Shouto was suspicious of that.

Not at the being safe part, that made sense. UA was a hero school and it was well renowned for having top of the line security, so within its walls and surrounded by heroes and hero hopefuls, they would be completely safe.

No, Shouto was suspicious of the sudden work that had come up for Endeavor about two hours before they were supposed to leave.

He was grumbling about it, but Fuyumi said with a solemn face that it was probably really important and that she would take care of her two younger brothers.

Endeavor had scoffed lightly and turned to him.

“Shouto, this will be your school in four years. Be a good representative of our family.”

Nothing to say to Natsuo, of course, who was maybe looking to join the General Education program despite being quirkless. They had lifted the ban two years ago, completely out of nowhere, and it was a good education besides, even if Natsuo didn’t want to be a hero.

Shouto was really confused as to why Fuyumi looked so excited. She wasn’t even going to be attending this school; it wasn’t like she could transfer, and she liked where she was now, so why was she so excited for this tour of a school?

Endeavor dropped them off when Present Mic, as he introduced himself loudly, met them at the gate, escorting them in.

He guided them through the halls, pointing out classrooms and such, but apparently their real tour guide would be meeting them soon; he was just getting them to him.

He opened a door and swept them inside to where a blond teenager with big red wings was sitting at a desk. He glanced up at them and broke out into a grin.

“Hi, I’m Fuyumi,” his sister stepped forward, “it’s nice to meet you!”

“Hawks! Er, no, Keigo Takami.” The bird boy scowled a little at the slip up, but was soon all smiles.

“HEY DABI!”

Shouto blinked as he yelled and heard some grumbling from another room.

“What do you want, birdy, I have…”

The boy trailed off when he saw them, eyes wide.

Fuyumi shot forward, grabbing his hands and clucking at the large purple burns that covered his body.

“Touya, what on earth have you been doing to yourself? Please tell me you’re getting treatment for these!”

“Duh, Recovery Girl would have my hide if I skipped a session. Always gonna have scars, but apparently in another two weeks I should be mostly healed up.”

Natsuo croaked out a “what?”

Shouto was pretty confused, but the boy (man?) grinned.

“Hey, Nats. It’s been a while. How’s home treating you?”

Natsuo sniffled and ran forward, slamming into the man (Hawks-Keigo had called him Dabi) and muttering stuff Shouto couldn’t hear but did have a few curse words in it.

“Dammit, I was right, you are going to be taller than me.”

Shouto furrowed his brow. What had Fuyumi called him? It certainly hadn’t been Dabi, but he had been too distracted by the scars and dark hair to catch it.

Dabi looked up at him and smiled softly. “Hi, Shou.”

Oh.

Touya.

~~~~~

Dabi was honestly having the time of his life, despite Yumi and Natsu taking turns ribbing him and the stupid pigeon putting in his own snide comments.
~~~~~

“Birdy,” he sighed, “if I get you chicken nuggets from Lunch Rush, will you clear out?”

Keigo shot him finger guns. “You’ve got yourself a deal, crispy! Have fun showing them around!”

He rolled his eyes and the bird took off, meandering down the halls to find someone to bother, and Yumi turned to him with a raised eyebrow.

“What?”

“You were right,” she mused, “he *is* cute.”

Dabi felt like he had activated his quirk on his face, and scowled. “Shut up, please and thank you. He’s annoying, as I’m sure you gathered.”

“Doesn’t stop him from being cute, though.”

Natsu chortled. “Didn’t know you were into airheads, Tou.”

Dabi rolled his eyes and shoved his hands in his pockets. “Don’t let the act fool you, he’s smart as hell. He just likes people underestimating him.”

Shou was quiet, but spoke up with a frown.

“Isn’t eating chicken cannibalism for him?”

He threw up his hands. “That’s what I said! But apparently it’s his favorite food and he’s a bird of prey, or some shit.”

Yumi gasped at his language, but Shouto just nodded.

“Is he a government agent? Because he’s a bird?”

Dabi snorted. “Nah, kid, I told Yumi already, but all the birds work for us, not the government. No bourgeoisie here. Except maybe Nedzu, he has all this tea.”

Shouto nodded solemnly and tugged on his sister’s sleeve. “I told you it wasn’t because of spring.”

She sighed. “Yes, I know, I found that out a few days ago myself.”

Natsu rolled his broad shoulders (and fuck that wasn’t fair, Dabi was just lanky as hell) and grinned. “So, I hear we’re going on a tour?”

“As if,” he retorted, “that was literally an excuse to get you guys here to talk.” He straightened up, forcing down the mirth to be serious for once.

“Little green is building a case against Endeavor.”

Both of his brothers bristled, Yumi already having heard the news, and he continued.

"I can show you around for now, Nedzu and Green will call us in when they're ready for statements; I've already given mine, but witness testimony from family will be really important." he grinned at his siblings. "But for now let me show you all the cool shit at UA."

~~~~~

Nedzu hummed.

"Now, it is time for us to form a plan. We cannot, as you know, simply bring forth a case against Endeavor, even with witness testimony, or the Hero Commission will sweep it under the rug."

"Unless we blackmail them!" Izuku chirped.

"Yes," Nedzu chuckled, "unless we blackmail them. But I feel we might want to hold onto any blackmail material we may or may not have for future enterprises."

Izuku nodded, green curls bobbing.

"Then what would you imagine is the best way to ensure they cannot dismiss it out of hand?"

Izuku tilted his head and hummed. "Get it in their heads without explicitly telling them?"
~~~~~

“And who is ‘they’ in this case?”

“The public.”

Nedzu blinked. “Not the Commission?”

Izuku shook his head. “We have to get the public support so the Commission has no choice but to take the case.”

“Interesting. And what methods would you use to get the public to think about it without directly telling them, as you said?”

Izuku hummed. “I think it was called… available yeristic?”

“Availability heuristic, but yes. What do you recall about that?”

“Well, it's the tendency to believe that the first thing that comes to mind is the right thing. It lets us make snap judgements, even if they’re wrong. So if you put something to the front of someone’s mind a lot, they’re more likely to believe you. It’s like the concept of boiling a frog. If you throw them into hot water, they’ll notice immediately and freak out, but if you slowly let the water heat up, it probably won’t notice.” He blinked. “It might still try to get away, though, since it’s a wild animal, but I think the analogy still holds.”

Nedzu chuckled. “Indeed, slow and steady wins the race, as it were. Anything else that might help or that we should be aware of going in?”

Izuku bit his lip. “Bias, probably. People believe that most heroes can do no wrong, which obviously isn’t true, so we need to overcome that bias. Priming can certainly help with that, if we lead with the right words to get people in the mindset, like “reckless” or “detrimental.” I think that one is fun and makes it sound really important.”

They took a moment to smile at each other before Izuku continued.

“So if we start by not even talking about heroes, but talking about damage and stuff, then we can get people on our side and then slowly introduce them to the concept that not all heroes are great. We need to slowly ease the public into the fact. Plus,” he perked up, “then we can slowly start to get rid of this emphasis on quirks so we can get rid of discrimination! A powerful quirk doesn’t make people predisposed to being a hero, since Endeavor certainly doesn’t live up to the name!”

Nedzu nodded. “An excellent point. This can help lay the groundwork for our future endeavors. Now, when do you believe the best time to do this is?”

Izuku hummed. “Soon. Since All Might is coming off of leave, we have the support network, but people also recognize a bit more that heroes are people too, since he needed to have that break. It will probably be easier for people to stomach if we don’t let them get back into the mindset that having the Symbol of Peace in business affords them…”

Nedzu slid over a laptop.

“Then I suggest we get started!”

~~~~~

Shouji checked the news and raised his eyebrows at the headline.

“Anonymous Researcher Releases Statistics on Villain Crimes by Percentage - highest are property damage, assault, and theft!”

Oh boy, it was starting.

~~~~~

Shouto was avidly watching for news reports, waiting for the day that Endeavor’s name would cross headlines in a negative light.

“Sidekick Razorsharp Found to be an Abuser!”

Closer and closer, with each anonymous article published.

~~~~~

Katsuki sneered at the latest headline. Zuku was really starting his campaign, huh? Well, good, it was about time he started to tear it all down.

“Three Top 100 Heroes you didn’t know had Scandals! Cover ups by the Commission!”
~~~~~

Just a matter of time, now.

~~~~~

Chako giggled and thrust her phone in front of Himiko. “Himi, look, Midori posted another one! This one is really blowing up!”

The blonde girl blinked. “Bush did? Cool!”

“Why “Collateral Damage” is Extrajudicial Justice and Why that is Illegal”

~~~~~

Keigo grinned. “Dabi, we’re one away, I think. Zuks has been looking excited and this one is pretty telling.”

“Oh yeah? What’s this one?”

“It’s not even his article, it’s just about him: Anonymous Journalist keeps getting Taken Down - what does the Government have to Hide?”

“Heh, yeah, that sounds about right.”

~~~~~
~~~~~

Enji Todoroki was fuming in his office. His PR department had been working overtime these past few weeks, ever since he got called into work that one time. Suddenly, people cared about his property damage; saying he caught the villain was not enough. And god forbid he *kill* the villain, then he was skirting the law and delivering unjust punishment. Anyone who got caught in the crossfire was stupid - everyone should know by now, if you see the number two hero (and didn't that grate, All Might took two years off but Enji was still number two as soon as the blond buffoon came back) than you should leave or face the consequences. If you got burned, it wasn't his fault, and people had understood that.

Until now.

The scandal of Razorsharp had made some ballsy journalists ask about his wife, which was ridiculous, because not only was that largely kept out of the public eye, but it was years ago, so why bother bringing it up now? She had snapped, gone off the deep end, what more was there to talk about? He got her the best care money could buy, which was exceptionally generous considered she damaged his masterpiece.

Then there were the scandals about the top 100 heroes getting their illegal dealings covered up by the Hero Commission, which, honestly, they should know better than to let the Commission fight their battles. The government was completely unreliable when it came to lawyers, despite literally being the basis of the legal system.

This was clearly proven in the Commission's inability to keep that crack pot anonymous journalist from publishing those articles every few days. They had it down to a science, let the public talk about the articles, let the news do a segment or two, and then just as interest was dying down, publish another one.

As fast as they got taken down, they got put back up. People had taken to getting screenshots of the articles so the word trackers could not identify the words via the pictures nearly as quickly, and everyone

seemed to have a copy.

And then the damn article came out.

“Endeavor: More Property Damage than the Top 100 Heroes Combined and the Top Ten Most Destructive Villains per year, And Most Death for Non-Violent Criminals.”

It was ridiculous.

Oh, it was a sound article, they cited all their sources from public databases, but the Commission had hidden those statistics for a reason; they didn’t look good.

And this article just laid them out for the world to see.

So yes, he caused a lot of property damage, but his Hellfire quirk was not a passive one, it was an active one, and if villains decided to run away, fire could spread.

And yes, sometimes the villains he was chasing (because calling them mere criminals was generous) did end up burnt beyond saving, but in the end he took another villain off the street, and people knew that.

So why was he getting such anger from the public?

People were calling for *review of his license* which was frankly, preposterous. He was the number two hero, for god’s sake, and he hadn’t gotten there playing nice with the villains or pandering to

civilians.

His PR department was angry with him and told him to make a public apology. He did, of course, saying he would try to be more careful in the future without compromising his job as a hero.

One news outlet (it may or may not have been run by the Hero Commission, but what the public didn't know wouldn't hurt them) talked about how in the time of All Might's two year break for health reasons (ridiculous, he should have just retired) that Endeavor was there to maintain and stabilize society, and that got some flak off of him. People finally understood how grateful they should be to him, and for a moment, everything seemed fine.

Then the final article came out and he found himself in a courtroom within a month.

"Testimony from Family: Endeavor is a Domestic Abuser - he drove his wife crazy and one child to death; heartbreaking stories from the Todoroki children."

He stared down all four of his children (Touya was *alive*) in the courtroom and the judge sentenced him to a stripped hero license and 10 years in prison.

He caught green eyes in the crowd as he was escorted out, and they were like venom, but the child they belonged to was smiling.

~~~~~

All of UA was celebrating, since Nedzu and Izuku were celebrating.
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They had had a successful campaign to bring down Endeavor and to lay the groundwork for dismantling the Commission, much to Keigo's enjoyment. They needed a little more work before they could get there, a few more cases against them, and then Keigo would finally be free to fly again, not just kept on UA grounds where they couldn't see him.

All of Izuku's strays were there (as Dabi called them), plus all of the teachers. It had taken several months to turn public opinion around completely, and Himiko was 12 and Kacchan was turning 11 in a week. Izuku quickly drew Shouto into their group of now seven, eight counting him, and Fuyumi, Keigo, and Dabi all hung out together as the almost adults. Natsuo was comparing medical notes with Shuichi and they were having quite the animated conversation. Apparently, Natsuo would be attending UA the next year, one year behind the lizard boy, who had transferred in to do his work experience with Recovery Girl.

Rei, the siblings' mother, was also there, having been released from the hospital and given full custody of her children. They had inherited the Todoroki family fortune, Enji losing all rights (and of course, no one would call him Endeavor, since his license had been stripped) and property, and they sold the estate and moved into a much smaller house is Mustafa, closer to UA and, consequently, Izuku and half of his group.

Shouto finally had friends and understood what it was like to play.

He also adopted his oldest brother's name for Izuku, calling him "Little Green." Chako made fun of Izuku for it, teasing him about how short he was, but Izuku just grinned.

His own mother was there, talking to Rei and talking about the neighborhood and the best places to shop, the times of the week the grocery store had the best deals, areas to stay away from, and so on. The white haired woman looked relieved to see the other mother and

between them and Nedzu they sat in a quiet corner drinking tea and smiling.

Izuku was really happy with how everything had turned out, but as the party wound down and they all said goodbye, going to their respective homes, Izuku sat down in front of the computer and got started on his next article as the anonymous “Greenbean.”

~~~~~

Quirk Bias and How it Hurts the Strong and the Weak

Recently, there was a huge scandal with Todoroki Enji, formerly known as Endeavor, the number two hero in Japan. It brought a point that not all heroes are infallible; indeed, they are just people, like you and me.

But before claims of his abuse were brought to light, most people disliked him for the amount of accidental death and property damage that he caused using his powerful quirk, Hellfire, a quirk that everyone can agree is strong and perfect for a hero.

But what if this mentality is hurting us as a whole?

Hellfire is a fire based quirk that is incredibly useful for villain detaining and intimidation, because no one wants to get burned. With a powerful quirk like that, everyone would say that you should become a hero, it’s the best job choice for someone that strong.

I would like to propose that this is a bad mindset to have, for a few reasons.
~~~~~

In former hero Endeavor, people saw his power and said that his faults were excusable. Looking at his records, he did not start as a destructive hero, but as more time went on, the numbers kept rising, and no one did anything about it.

Because of his powerful quirk, we as a society said it was ok.

Consider children in school.

High school is the first opportunity to go to a hero school and try to become a hero, but anyone who has taken a hero school entrance exam will tell you that it's not the easiest thing in the world to do. Some people might have great quirks for heroics, but there's a heavy focus on flashy and powerful quirks to the point where most of them have to settle for General Education, even if they would make fantastic heroes otherwise.

Where does this mentality come from?

In general, people get their quirks around their fourth birthdays, and from then on, people have already decided what they can or can't be. If you have a powerful and flashy quirk, like water manipulation, then you are told your entire life that you would make a great hero.

I'm not saying that's wrong, but I am saying that this mindset is a hindrance to our children and their futures.

Being a hero is more than just having a powerful quirk - I hope my articles have shown that, at the very least.

Let us further our example of the person with a water manipulation quirk.

There are current heroes who also deal with water, like the Water Hose duo, Backdraft, Wash, and so on. People can see them and find inspiration and hope, and they are role models for children with similar quirks.

This child is in school and everyone says and thinks they will make a great hero. To get into hero schools, you need to have good grades. If the student gets a poor grade on a test, a teacher might give them extra credit opportunities to help boost their grades, because they wouldn't want to lose such a promising hero candidate over something as silly as history or art.

The teachers praise the student, telling them how much potential they have, and the child starts to notice that people with weaker and less flashy quirks don't get the same kind of treatment. They are the only ones the teachers speak about in such glowing terms.

Children learn what they are taught.

This child starts to think that because the others do not get praised, the others are lesser. They are worse, simply because they don't have a powerful quirk. They start picking on the other kids.

The teachers do nothing, not wanting anything to happen to their star pupil for something as simple and innocent as name calling.

Kids will be kids, they say.

The name calling escalates to pushing people, to hurting them, to walking all over them, and the teachers do nothing, because this child is going to be a hero, and who are they to get in the way of that? The other kids probably did something to make them mad, and honestly should know better.

The child thinks this is completely normal. Anyone with a quirk that isn't flashy, or is considered weak, or god forbid is quirkless, is lesser than them, merely the pebbles beneath their feet.

They go to hero school surrounded by other people with flashy quirks, graduate, and get their licenses.

They become another Endeavor, because they are better than everyone else and therefore above the law.

But this doesn't just hurt the strong, this also hurts the weak. People have a "villainous" quirk, or they look like a "monster" because of their quirk, or they're "weak" and "useless."

Before quirks, every job was done by a quirkless person.

They had no inherent benefits, no special powers that made them better at their jobs, nothing of the sort, but suddenly, if you don't have a quirk, or you have a quirk people don't like, it's incredibly difficult to find a job.

Quirkless statistics state that there is a 90% unemployment rate for people without quirks. Mutant quirks boast a 70% unemployment rate, including in jobs where having a quirk doesn't actually help you at all. Weak and non-flashy quirks have a 75% chance to be passed over in favor of stronger quirked individuals even when they have better credentials.

Since when did your DNA determine how good you would be at a job?

When did we start looking past talent, experience, and aptitude for our hiring practices?

If someone goes to medical school to become a doctor, but looks like a bug, should we deny them the ability to work as a doctor, despite having their medical license?

Are people less human for whatever quirks they may or may not have?

All in all, the more people focus on quirks, the more our society gets hurt. We should be held accountable for our actions and abilities, not the special power we were born with, or lack thereof.

We are all human, and we all deserve a chance to do what we love.

Signing off for now,

Greenbean

Izuku grinned as he shut his computer down for the night. Yes, everything was coming along very nicely. He couldn't wait for it to all fall into place!

Chapter End Notes

everything after the signing off is brought to you by my wife

I have a ten step plan we will be working through to take down the HC and we'll get some kids on the way and see more Nedzu and Izuku friendship, also probably some games

also, welcome to social psych lmao, couldn't give you the full semester because not everything applied to this situations, but the availability heuristic is probably one of the most commonly referenced things lmao

A Party and a Plan

Chapter Summary

> we have a birthday party, get another kid, and also start steps 3-5 on the world domination checklist (1 and 2 are done, fear not)

Chapter Notes

> im not even kidding about the checklist btw, I have a ten step plan

See the end of the chapter for more notes

They were planning Himiko's twelfth birthday when she tugged on Ochako's sleeve.

"Ne, Chako, can we invite my cousin?"

Ochako felt her brow crinkle. "Your cousin?"

Himi nodded. "Yeah! I forgot about him for a while, but I kind of remember him, and he was nice! I don't think I've seen him in a long time., so I was wondering if he could come to my birthday party!"

Ochako shrugged. "I don't see why not, but we have to find him first. Do you know how old he is?"

She bit her lip. "I dunno… he was five last time I saw him, but I can't remember how old I was… he lived in another prefecture so we didn't get to see him or auntie or uncle that often…"

Ochako hummed.

“I think Izuku guessed you ran away from home when you were nine, so he would at least be eight now, even if the last time you saw him was right before you left. Were you older or younger than him?”

Himi blinked, thinking. “Older…? I think so.”

“Then he’s between eight and eleven! Do you remember anything else about him?”

Himi flopped onto the couch, swinging her feet. “He was blonde, like me! But his eyes weren’t yellow, they were blue. I think I called him Nei-chan!”

Ochako nodded, face set in determination. “Ok! Now we just gotta figure out who he is so we can invite him to your birthday party!”

“Yeah!” Himi cheered, giving a fanged grin.

Ochako whipped out her phone and scrolled through her contact until she found the one she was looking for.

“Izuku! We need your help finding Himiko’s cousin so we can invite him to her birthday party!”

“*… ok? How much information do you have already?”*

“A nickname, an age range, and a basic description!”

“ *Yeah, I can work with that, send me what you have.* ”

“Thanks Izuku! You’re the best!”

She hung up and texted out the details, sticking her tongue out of the corner of her mouth.

“Aaaaaand, sent! Now we just wait for him to work his magic and find your cousin Nei-chan!”

Himi giggled. “Bush is pretty smart at this stuff!”

Ochako made a noise of agreement. “Ok, who else are we inviting?”

“Well, the whole gang! Hugmaster and Bomberanian, Purple and Bird Boy, oh, and Birdie and Crispy and all of Crispy’s siblings too! And grandma and the lizard boy! Am I forgetting anyone?”

She pressed a finger to her chin. “Nope, pretty sure that’s it! Bird Boy is Kouji and birdie is Keigo, right?”

“Yeah!”

“Then yeah, that’s everyone! Ok, so that’s who we’re inviting, what type of cake do you want?”

Himi bit her lip. “There’s not a blood cake, is there?”

“Nope, but there is red velvet! Explodey doesn’t like it but he doesn’t have to have any.”

Golden eyes widened. “Red…velvet?”

“Yup! It’s super red. Pretty sure it's a chocolate cake base? Maybe? I dunno, I don’t bake.” SHe sat up straight. “It usually has cream cheese icing which is tart and delicious!”

“Then let’s have that!”

Ochako grinned. “Ok! Now, where to have it…” She leaned forward, yelling into the house.

“Mr. Kan? Can we have the party in the park?”

“…Yeah, sure.”

“Thank you!!!! Ok, so if you want, we can have the party in the park. It might be hot because it’s August, but then we can run around and play!”

Himi nodded. “I want to play with you guys! Bomberanian sounds like a fun villain to play against!”

She giggled. “Yep, he really isi, he takes it way too seriously and

makes scary explosions." She leaned in and whispered, "Don't tell him they aren't really scary or he'll pout and stop playing."

Himi snickered and nodded solemnly.

Ochako's phone dinged. She checked the message and grinned, thrusting the phone in her friend's face.

"Is this him?"

Her eyes widened, and they shared a grin.

"Yes! That's Nei-chan!"

"And now to find him!" Ochako forwarded the text to Kouji with an added message.

Ochako: can you find this kid for me and himi

Kouji :3: yeah why

Ochako: he's himi's cousin!!!

Ochako: we're inviting him to the birthday party but need a way to get messages to him

Ochako: so if you could find his address that'd be swell

Kouji :3: yeah I'll put out a notice in his area

Kouji :3: if you give me an extra invitation with, hopefully, an explanation letter to him, then I can deliver it too and save the postage

Ochako: omg kouji you;re the best!!!!!

Kouji :3: lol thanks

"And done! All we need to do know is pick the time, make these invitations, and get them out! The rest of us will handle decorations!"

Himi pouted. "But I wanted to help with decorations!"

"Himi," she laughed, "it's your party, you can't see the decorations until it's time!"

"Ugh, fine."

"Don't worry, I know what you like! It's gonna be great!"

Himiko grinned at her friend, pink dusting her cheeks. "Yeah!"

~~~~~

Neito was generally a suspicious person. You had to be, with a quirk like his. No one really liked him, so any advances had to be taken
~~~~~

with a grain of salt and a healthy dash of skepticism. It saved him from getting hurt.

He had noticed the influx of birds, the little brown ones, and they seemed to be watching him. Ok, maybe someone was going to play a prank on him, but none of them had pooped on him yet, so maybe the birds were just being weird. Maybe he had accidentally copied the quirk of someone who was incredibly appealing to birds, and the scent or whatever had stuck around even once the copy had worn off.

Maybe they thought his hair was straw, good for building nests.

And then a slightly bigger bird flew over him and dropped an envelope on him.

He scowled in the direction the bird had gone and bent to pick it up, thinking it had stolen someone's mail and decided to lay the blame on him. The least he could do was see if it was anyone nearby so he could immediately give it back and save them all the trouble.

…It was addressed to him.

Ok, now he was almost certain that the birds were working against him, but when he looked up to glare at them, they were gone. Other than a few flying in the distance, every single bird that had been following him had disappeared.

He frowned, looking back at the envelope.

He slid a finger under the flap and tore it open.

Inside were two different things, a card, and a folded piece of paper. The notecard was more colorful, so he looked at that first.

“You’re Invited!

Mustafa Park, 10 am - 2 pm, to celebrate the birthday of Sekijiro Himiko!”

That name seemed familiar, maybe an old classmate? Odd that they would invite him, and by bird no less. The invitation also said that you didn’t need to bring a gift, but Neito was still confused.

Well, piece of paper time.

He unfolded it and stopped in shock as he read the first line.

“Dear Nei-chan!”

Himi-chan .

~~~~~

Izuku sent the information back to Uraraka, silently wishing her and Himiko the best at finding her cousin, and turned back to his laptop, seated in Nedzu’s office.
~~~~~

“So Nedzu, I’ve been doing research into the various criminal organizations in Japan.”

“And what have you discovered, Izuku?”

“So there’s a lot of gangs, not really considered villains as they are small time criminals, but a few of them will probably need heroic intervention. There’s also a really big shadow organization that I’m decently sure is the guy who hurt All Might two years ago, since they had a dip in productivity around that time. Then there’s the yakuza, which I would normally categorize as small time criminals but they also have way more money and power.”

Nedzu hummed, sipping his tea. “I see. May I ask why you have been researching them?”

He sighed. “As much as we hate the Hero and Public Safety Commission, they’re a cornerstone of society and arguably our basis of government. If we dismantle either or both to put in better policies and order, there will be a time in between it being bad and it being good where there’s a lot of chaos. Anarchy, I guess. Even if we have full public support, criminals and villains will see that as the time to rise up, band together, and try to take power.”

“Hmm, I see! And I’m assuming you’re trying to come up with a plan to stop that?”

“Mhm.”

Nedzu took another sip, leaning back in his chair and focusing his full attention on Izuku and the conversation.

“Very well, do you have any ideas?”

“Well, off the top of my head, all we have to do is get rid of them, or at least significantly weaken them before we make the push on the Commission. I guess we could always build a case against them and let the government do its job, but that not only puts unnecessary pressure and risk on heroes, but will make people view the government in a favorable light, which will hurt us in the long run.”

Izuku perked up, eyes flashing, and he grinned at his friend. “But if we could make them destroy each other, then we don’t have to worry about that! They can take care of themselves!”

Nedzu chuckled. “True enough. I imagine it would be difficult to arrange that, however.”

Izuku furrowed his brow. “Yeah, but I can plan how I want things to go in the meantime and then figure out how to get them to do it later.”

“Fair enough. Do keep me updated, Izuku!”

“Of course!”

~~~~~

Himiko was really excited for her party. They had commandeered a few picnic tables in the park and she was sitting at one, swinging her feet back and forth. Today, she turned twelve, so in two years she could go to UA if she wanted! She could already visit, of course, like all of Bush’s friends, but she had recently been looking at school work
~~~~~

and she just found it fun!

It was hard, for sure, since she was pretty behind, but Chako and the rest would come by to help explain the things she didn't get.

She was really good at science, as it turned out, but absolutely terrible at everything else, so when she needed a break, she would work on science to make herself feel better. Biology and chemistry, mind you, since physics was really just math but only the word problems.

But today she didn't have to think about school because today was her birthday!

Himiko was super excited to see all her friends again, even if it hadn't been that long. Chako was already there, and Bird Boy was absolutely covered in wildlife, whispering to each other and no doubt checking all his connections, since he was occasionally shooting off texts to probably Bush. Bush was working on some really big things with Nedzu, the little mouse man who was also the principal, and Bird Boy was helping him get all the fun information he needed! Just like when they found Himiko!

Crispy came with grandma, Lizard Boy, and Birdie, and he was definitely riling up Birdie. Himiko giggled and ran over to give grandma a hug.

"I'm so glad you came!"

Grandma chuckled. "Of course, my dear."

"Dabi, I swear to god-"

“Oh, sorry, did I ruffle your feathers?”

She giggled again. “Crispy, stop riling him up!”

Crispy immediately looked affronted and rounded on Birdie.

“Keigo, did you teach her that god awful nickname?”

Birdie was trying not to laugh. “No, she taught it to me.”

Himiko gasped. Hugmaster was here, with Purple! She bounded over and extended her arms wide before pouncing on the really tall boy and melting into his hug with a sigh.

“Hello to you too.”

She giggled and looked out from the mesh of arms. “Purple, you don’t like physical affection!”

He raised his eyebrows. “Still upset I didn’t even get a hello.”

She extracted herself from Hugmaster and gently placed a hand on top of Purple’s head. He leaned into it and she giggled.

“You’re like a cat!”

He nodded solemnly. “That is the highest compliment I have ever received. Thank you.”

“-and if you really try, I bet you can create steam and water no problem, so really, you have almost four elements at your disposal-”

“Little Green,” Crispy strolled over, hands in his pockets, “please stop traumatizing my baby brother.”

Bush blinked and looked at the peppermint boy. “Oh no, I’m so sorry, I didn’t mean to!”

Peppermint boy blinked. “I wasn’t traumatized. It was nice.”

Crispy grabbed onto Peppermint and their two siblings, escorting them away from Bush. “Don’t be fooled, soon enough that kid is gonna rule the world.”

“Oh, I didn’t think I had told anyone that plan.”

“Wait a minute, I was joking, do you mean to tell me-”

“WHAT IS UP FUCKERS, THE PARTY HAS ARRIVED!”

Himiko giggled and bounded over to her latest guest. “Hi hi! You’re almost the last one to arrive!”

Bomberanian sniffed and turned up his nose. “It’s called being fashionably late.”

She rolled her eyes. “Yeah, ok, now go join the others! We’re about to start!”

She hung back a bit, smiling brightly as the gathered people talked. These were all her friends! She had so many friends, and they were all so nice, in their own ways, and none of them thought she was weird, and everything was perfect! Even Mr. Kan was here, and he had let her take his last name so she didn’t have to think about her old parents!

“…Himi?”

She froze and slowly turned around.

A blond boy stood there, looking as shocked as she felt.

“Is it… Is it really you?”

She nodded, eyes wide. “You got so big, Nei-chan.”

“Yeah, it’s been almost six years. I’ve more than doubled in age.” He shifted on his feet. “You look better.”

She smiled, eyes still staring. “Thanks! I feel better. I’ve met really nice people and they helped me.”

“I know, you said, in your… in your letter.” He seemed to shake himself out of his daze and raised an eyebrow. “What was with that bird delivery system, anyway?”

She snorted and leapt forward to drag him to the party. “That was Bird Boy; come on, I’ll introduce you to everyone.”

She didn’t mention the tears in her eyes and mercifully, he didn’t either.

~~~~~

All for One was reasonably annoyed.

Not destroy-a-city-ward annoyed, but certainly kill-a-minion-to-relieve-stress annoyed.

A crucial difference that said minions were sure to make careful note of.

The reasons he was annoyed were numerous. For one, All Might had come back from his “vacation” looking better than ever. All for One had hoped that the “vacation” was really a ploy from his agency because they didn’t know how to break it to the public that he had died, but no such luck. It seemed as if the buffoon had actually taken the time to get better, which seemed completely unlike him. He was sure he had gotten the man good, but aside from reduced hours the first few months after his return, the number one hero seemed back in business like he had never taken a vacation in the first place.
~~~~~

It was annoying.

Another irritant was the Shimura boy. Oh yes, he had completely forgotten about his past and his old name, and he had a burning hatred for heroes that had All for One smirking, but he was also childish in more ways than one, and the cost of replacing all the things he destroyed with his quirk was, while inconsequential, not unnoticeable. God, he would throw a fit every other day, it felt like, and something or someone would pay the price. Honestly. If he hadn't already invested so much into the boy already, he would probably have called it quits years ago.

Every month, Tomura tested that resolve.

It was annoying.

For another, he'd gotten rumors that a lot of the small time gangs and the yakuza of yesteryear (because let's be honest, they were a shadow of what they once were) had started teaming up to take control of the underground, which was unacceptable. All for One was an *emperor* , not some king who could be so easily overthrown. A well placed bribe here, a stolen quirk there, and he had his subjects chipping away at them, so that when they finally got too big for their britches, it would all come crumbling down.

It was a stroke of good fortune that one of his informants had overheard one of the gangs talking about the rumors, thinking about joining up. To think that even rival gangs were looking past history in the name of power was insulting, honestly. There was only one top dog, and it was him.

It. Was. Annoying.

On the other hand, that anonymous journalist had completely destabilized public opinion on heroes and taken out the number two, a big player and major obstacle. He almost wanted to find the writer and thank them for setting his plans even further in motion; perhaps he could do that after he became Emperor of Japan. It would be child's play to find the journalist, but they had published anonymously, so he'd let them maintain that illusion of privacy for a little while yet.

Then again, the journalist had also started posting about quirks, and it was also quite annoying. The things they talked about were all true, of course, but All for One didn't want the public to know and believe that. People with powerful quirks putting down those with weak or "villainous" quirks were practically the cornerstone of his hiring practices, and for that to be disrupted was a thorn in his side.

A small thorn, but a thorn all the same.

It was only one article, but because everyone knew of this "Greenbean" already, while it would have been dismissed out of hand mere months ago, now people already considered it.

It was annoying.

But oh well, it was one journalist, and he had more pressing matters to deal with. Eventually, society would come crawling back to what it knew, which was quirk supremacy.

How odd to live through the time when quirks were a death sentence, and now, it's completely the opposite.

People would fall in line, because they craved power, more than comfort, more than safety, more than knowledge, more than anything.

Everything would go his way in the end, and he had all the time in the world.

Chapter End Notes

afo is such a dick he's so fun to write, like wow, what an asshole, take your ego down a few hundred notches my guy.

anyway steps 3-5 are going well, see you next time

(also I may or may not have impulsively started a new fic, so check out my profile for "Of Spirits and Demons" if you want lol, it's been added to the rotation at the request of the discord)

A Mystery Solved

Chapter Summary

we go back to our roots and play another board game and then see things from another side.

then we finish it off with some crack curtesy of the discord server lmao

Chapter Notes

the game is only mentioned by name at the very end of its segment, but it's called Mysterium and I really enjoy it myself

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Bring 5-6 of your closest friends on Saturday!

Best wishes,

:)”

Oh boy!

~~~~~

Mezou had no earthly idea why Izuku had sent out a “summons” to six of them, but he wasn’t entirely concerned. Sure, Izuku could be terrifying, but not to his friends, so unless this was a meeting to sniff out a traitor, all of them would be fine.

And none of them were stupid enough to be a traitor, not this late in the game.
~~~~~

He met with Hitoshi, Bakugo, Kouji, and Shouto at the gates of UA. Ochako had been invited too, but she had already made plans with Himiko and Neito for the three of them to hang out, so she couldn't make it.

Izuku bounded up to them from the sidewalk. "Sorry I'm late, I was trying to figure out the code and lost track of time!"

Bakugo raised an eyebrow. "What fucking code?"

Izuku grinned. "Nedzu sent me a letter, which is why I asked you guys to come here, but he was super vague, so I figured he might have hidden a secret message in code. I have no idea why he wanted you guys here!"

Mezou took it back, if Nedzu was really the one who had summoned them, then this was a whole different ball game.

He was suddenly and reasonably concerned.

"Welp, let's go in!"

Izuku skipped forward, forcing the other five to follow, and Mezou exchanged a glance with Hitoshi. The other boy looked more awake than he had a few minutes ago.

They made it all the way to Nedzu's office before the door swung open, revealing Nedzu.

“Ah, the mediums have arrived! Thank you for answering the call, I do hope you can be of assistance!”

Izuku blinked then broke out into a grin.

“It’s a game,” he whispered to the gathered group.

“You see,” Nedzu continued, sending a wink Izuku’s way, “I have recently discovered a ghost haunting these very halls, and I was hoping that you fine psychics would be able to help me determine how the poor thing died! Do you think yourself up to the task?”

Izuku looked back with a beaming grin, and they all nodded in agreement. This sounded pretty fun, actually.

“Excellent,” he clapped his paws together, “then please follow me to where the ghost is most present! The ghost has terrible amnesia, you see, but I was able to identify everyone who passed through the area in the time frame of their death, and they should be able to remember who was there with your help, as well as the location of their death and the murder weapon, of course!”

He swept into one of the meeting rooms where there was indeed a game setup. At one end of the table was a screen, hiding things from view, and next to it was a large stack of large cards. Nedzu plopped himself in the chair and winked.

“I would have had one of you be the ghost, but since Miss Uraraka had prior engagements, I will have to fill the role myself. Please take a seat at one of the mediums and I can explain the game.”

Izuku sat down at the yellow colored medium (Bakugo picked black, Hitoshi picked purple, Kouda picked blue, Shouto picked white, and Mezou was left with red, which suited him fine). In the center of the table, past their little crystal ball shaped tokens, was a broken clock and three levels below it that were full of cards.

The first row directly under the clock (which was a cardboard cutout, not a real clock) had smaller cards that all had weapons on them. Some were obvious, like a knife and a gun, but others were a candlestick, a marble bust, a rope, and a dumbell.

Below that level were artistic drawings of rooms. There was a library, a bedroom, a kitchen, a study, a garden, and so on.

Below that were seven different portraits of people, with various items scattered around the cards that indicated their profession and such.

All in all, there were seven of each type of card, separated by a thin cardboard strip.

“Behind my screen I have assigned each of the mediums a set of three - a suspect, a location, and a weapon. There are seven hours, or rounds, to the game, indicated by the clock you see here. Every medium has to have correctly identified their set of three by the time those 7 rounds are up or we all lose. To identify, I will be giving you a number of vision cards - you see, this ghost is mute and can only communicate through sending the mediums visions! They are quite surreal, but hopefully they will give you a good indication of who or what you are looking for.”

He smiled. “You will all start with the suspect, then once you have that, you will put it in front of you and your next set of visions will be for the location. At the end, if everyone has found all three cards, we will have a final round where the ghost will remember which of them

is really the suspect, and then we will vote based on the visions given. The amount of the visions you see will depend on the amount of points you earn throughout the game."

He extended a paw to the spaces in front of them. "You might have noticed these little teardrop shaped tokens you have. Three of them have a checkmark and three of them have an ex. When one of your fellow mediums makes a guess, you can use any or all of your tokens to indicate whether you think they are correct or not. If your token matches the outcome, you get a clairvoyancy point. The fourth turn will see your tokens returned to you, so best to use them before then. At the end, eight clairvoyancy points will be enough for you to see all three visions for the final clue, so do try and aim for that."

Izuku raised a hand. "Can we tell people what we think their visions mean?"

"Of course! This is a cooperative game, and you win or lose together!"

They were all done by the fifth round.

It was a combination of trusting Izuku and knowing that Izuku also had a pretty good grasp of Nedzu's head at this point that had them getting pretty good at guessing the right things.

For example, Hitoshi's suspect was this old spinster looking lady, and Izuku was quick to point out how both her card and the vision he had received had a red ball of yarn, completely ignoring the plates and mounted antlers also in the picture that made Hitoshi think of the hunter or the chef.

Mezou's location was a room filled with birdcages and sheet covered

furniture. A skylight filled the room with blue and green light, and Nedzu gave him two vision cards, which were both incredibly blue.

Shouto's weapon was the shaving knife, and his vision for that included a wheat field, which, as Izuku put it, "looked a lot like hair."

All in all, Bakugo and Shouto were the only two who didn't get to eight clairvoyancy points.

They cleared off the table and laid out their six suspects, locations, and weapons and Nedzu put a circular token face down on the board.

"I will now give the three visions. For our two mediums who did not clear the eight point threshold, you must vote after seeing only two of these visions. Each vision will apply to a different part of the story, here we are!"

He flipped up the first two and they all immediately started pointing things up and tying them to various suspects until they got it down to two. The two boys slid their vote tokens (which were the other side of the clairvoyancy tokens, numbered 1-6) onto the table and Nedzu flipped up the third vision.

Izuku nodded. "It's clear, it's Shouto's."

Everyone else voted, it was counted to be a majority vote for Shouto's set of cards, and Nedzu flipped up the token.

"Congratulations, mediums, you have won and laid the poor ghost to rest!"

They cheered.

“Now that this is through, and mostly everyone is here, how are things looking for our unwitting adversaries?” Nedzu looked around at the boys before focusing on Izuku.

“Well the underground is stirring. No one’s made any *major* moves yet. But I don’t think it’ll be long before they really start fighting!”

Izuku looks down at his phone when it dings before adding, “And Kouchan says the commission is buzzing like a kicked bee hive over Keigo!”

Kouji nods beside Mezou.

“They don’t seem to know how to deal with us ignoring them and stealing their golden egg, but I’m not sure if they know we have him. It’s been months, they must have *some* idea.”

Nedzu hums “Excellent! Now, would one of you like to be the ghost for our next game of Mysterium?”

~~~~~~

Akai Itami considered himself a careful man. When you’re leading an entire gang, you have to be careful and get as much information as possible, to keep your people safe and know the best places to hit.
~~~~~~

It also let you know who to *not* hit.

Some people in the underground would give you major shit if you so much as glanced at them wrong, and those rumors were arguably the most precious to Akai. Rumors of heroes were helpful, but his gang was tight knit, they could get past some heroes. The yakuza, rival gangs, or the fucking boogeyman were not things they could easily get past.

Some were easy; for the yakuza, just note their territory and be polite if you can, they have some pretty heavy hitters even if they're a shadow of what they once were, and they have money. Good to be on their good side. For rival gangs, it was kinda the same, but you really didn't want to give other gangs a reason to fight you, it just hurt both of you.

And then there was the fucking boogeyman.

Akai had heard of him, of course, all the big fish in the underground talked about him, spreading rumors and catching information, but Akai had never had the misfortune to meet the guy. According to myth and legend, he had been around since the dawn of quirks, which seemed impossible, but Akai figured it was something of a legacy position, like the Dread Pirate Roberts from that ancient (but excellent) movie the gang sometimes put on for movie nights.

The dude could give and take quirks, which sucked major dick, because they needed those, in general. If you made him mad, you would disappear and never come back. Not even a body, you were just gone.

So, understandably, Akai was worried when one of his informants let him know the boogeyman was making a move to take over the entire underground and wipe out every gang and yakuza that didn't belong

to him.

Naturally, he contacted his allies, told them to contact their allies, and called an emergency meeting under the flag of truce.

Surprisingly, a lot of people showed up. The invitation said leaders or representatives and one other, and pretty much everyone had adhered to that. Gangs who hadn't got given the stink eye in the crowded warehouse and quickly sent their extras outside.

Everyone perched on crates and the floor, making it almost seem like a colosseum with an empty center for whoever decided they wanted to take the stage.

"Why did you call us together, Snakes?"

Akai stood up with a sigh. "We have word the boogeyman is making a move that serves to put all of us under."

"How under?"

"Six feet."

A grumble went up, but Mori of the Flying Fish spoke up.

"I heard those rumors as well. Do you think there's any credit to them?

Akai nodded. “People have started to disappear. If this All for One really wanted us gone, he could do it, but he’s being quiet about it for now. Maybe he thinks we won’t catch on in time and he can officially wipe everyone else out.”

The room quieted with a deep hum, and Akai tensed to recognize the elderly leader of the Shie Haissakai, stroking his chin.

“We have also noted some members of the family disappearing. There is merit to this rumor after all.” Golden eyes locked onto Akai’s. “What do you propose we do about it?”

Akai swallowed. “I called us here under the flag of truce. If we could extend that and form a coalition to fight against the forces of All for One, we might be able to take him out first and save our skins. Once the threat is gone, all rivalries could go right back, but we need a united front against the boogeyman.”

Hitoni of the Black Daggers scoffed. “Oh yeah, the Snakes are all about harmony and holding hands. We haven’t forgotten the slight from two months ago, when you decided to do business with the *Party Poopers* instead of us!”

The representatives of the Party Poppers bristled. “Sorry we offered a better deal than the Butter Knives!”

The fighting rose for a bit more until the yakuza raised a single hand, and it all stilled.

“We have the money. You all have the manpower. If we combine our resources, not even the notorious quirk stealer himself will be able to stop us.” Golden eyes narrowed in anger. “He should know better than to mess with the Shie Haissakai. We are willing to be a part of

this coalition.”

Akai breathed a sigh of relief. They were old money, old business, and with them on board, people were more likely to accept and join up themselves.

In the end, only a few gangs had decided against it, either going off on their own or actively going out to join their enemy, but Akai looked at the gathered group of gangs from all over the area, and the yakuza besides, and he felt confident that All for One would regret crossing the rest of the underground.

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Himi: had a nightmare… can you guys distract me?

Chako: what is your opinion on walking your pet fish

Kouji: you can’t walk a fish

Himi: Sounds like a good time, but wouldn't last long

Neito: Wait what how do you walk a fish

Shouto: with great effort

Zuku: technically there are strollers with the fish bowl in so you can
~~~~~

Toshi: when you fish, like to eat them

Toshi: you can leave them on a line to swim until you are done for the day

Chako: is water wet

Blasty: no, go the fuck to sleep

Toshi: is the ocean a soup

Himi: no because soup is hot

Toshi: there are cold soups

Himi: true

Jiji: doesn't mean they're good

Chako: the ocean is a soup

Neito: calling the ocean a soup is cursed

Himi: not all soups are good

Toshi: not all goods are soup

Zuku: also everything is cursed tbh

Toshi: are humans soup

Neito: somehow that's even more cursed

Zuku: I mean bones have proteins in them

Zuku: as do other things

Zuku: and we're mostly made of water

Chako: noodles

Chako: we're made of noodles

Kouji: yes but we're not liquid, like soup is

Zuku: unless you have a quirk for that!

Toshi: is cereal soup or overdressed salad

Blasty: I hate this fucking family

Shouto: soup

Toshi: but you can eat cereal without milk tho

Toshi: you can't really eat soup without the fluid

Kouji: also there's no meat or veg in it

Chako: cereal is noodles for the soup

Chako: there

Chako: you can have noodles without soup and cereal without milk

Chako: therefore

Shouto: cereal is just uncooked pasta

Neito: oh gods, we've gone into "vague definitions that everyone fights over" territory

Neito: no one talk about hot dogs

Zuku: cereal is technically cooked, whereas pasta is just dried before *being* cooked

Chako: exactly!

Chako: you guys get it!

Kouji: fine, cereal is pasta cooked without liquid

Chako: pasta and cereal both get softer in liquid

Chako: they're similar that way

Toshi: where would a giraffe wear a bowtie

Blasty: near the body

Toshi: not near the head?

Blasty: no

Chako: They'd literally have a human tie it around the middle of the huge neck (with a ladder) or something

Kouji: where would you hide a body

Zuku: in a pig farm

Toshi: in a wetland

Zuku: pigs will eat every part of the body!

Himi: in a ditch with Alton's cursed candy

Neito: who is alton???

Neito: why is his candy cursed?????

Shouto: I didn't know pigs ate people

Jiji: anything that gets thrown into their pens is fair game

Kouji: yeah it's kind of horrifying tbh

Blasty: not sure how this is helping vampire chick get over her nightmare

Himi: oh no, it is!

Himi: thank you guys so much!

Himi: I'm all good now!

Zuku: of course!

Zuku: glad we could help :)

Toshi: if you ever need more inane questions i gotchu

Blasty: finally you guys can go the fuck to sleep, its almost 2 in the morning for fucks sake

Chako: ;P

Toshi: bold of you to assume I sleep

Zuku: oh no!

Zuku: is it that late?

Jiji: what were you doing this time

Zuku: research

Zuku: guess i lost track of time

Zuku: oh, kouji, if you're still up, did you get that thing I needed?

Kouji: it was annoying and dangerous

Kouji: but yes

Kouji: I'll deliver it to you tomorrow

Shouto: ominous

Neito: what on earth have I gotten myself into

Blasty: there's no escape, just get used to it

Blasty: I had to

Chako: as if you weren't the first friend izuku had

Blasty: shut your damn mouth and go to bed

Zuku: good night!

Zuku: or morning or whatever!

Chapter End Notes

my wife brought that conversation (which happened in real life) to my attention and I couldn't not include it, because it is absolutely something they would talk about lmao

names!

Akai Itami means Red Pain, as a direct relation to his quirk
Mori means lance or harpoon
Hitoni means literally nothing important, that name is cobbled together lmao

A Peanut Butter and Honey Sandwich

Chapter Summary

I would like to remind you of the game BS. That is all.

Chapter Notes

also we got another meme thanks to my wonderful perfect discord lol, I kept forgetting to put this in

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Izuku looked at the papers spread before him and his friend.

“Nedzu, do you think this is enough?”

He hummed. “To take them down completely, no, but to make the first move, for certain! Which case would you like to use to open negotiations?”

Izuku tapped his chin. “The Endeavor case was good, but we’ve already unearthed and publicized almost everything in that case, so that won’t have as much of a punch. Keigo is one of our biggest guns, the lynchpin, but it would certainly get them scared, and maybe we could use it to get more, minor cases out?”

Nedzu picked up a paper, sipping tea from his other paw. “Perhaps the Endeavor case has merit after all. People were suspicious that the government and the Commission in particular were silencing you - it went away, of course, when they took the case, but another article to bring it up would send them right back into the spotlight!”

Izuku grinned and nodded. “True! They were covering up the scandal of someone giving the heroes negative press - we can use that.”

He picked up another paper. “The article on Razorsharp was the first one that got attacked, but people kept reposting it. He was only a sidekick of a top 50 hero, but they still tried to keep it on the down low… do you think they knew what I was doing?”

“I wouldn’t give them that much credit,” Nedzu chuckled, “there are few people who are both paying attention and smart enough to make the connection. I have no doubt someone in the Commission has figured it out, perhaps even the president herself, but there is nothing they could do about it but try to take down the articles, and we both saw how well *that* turned out.”

Izuku giggled. “Do you think you can get us a meeting with the president next week?”

Nedzu cocked his head. “Is next week not the 15th?”

Izuku grinned. “What better way to celebrate turning twelve than starting the plan?”

Nedzu bared his teeth in a smile that normally sent people running, but Izuku just smiled back. “Yes,” the principal murmured, “that does sound like an excellent idea. Let me make some calls, and I would be more than happy to look over your game plan when you have it.”

Izuku beamed. “Thanks, Nedzu!”

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Seijito Ranyou considered herself above all others. She had a position of power, a legion of lackeys to carry out her plans, and taxpayer money to fund them. She had government backing and almost full autonomy, and she was directly in charge of the entire hero community, which in turn, made her the de facto leader of society.

Sure, she wasn't the face of the nation, but she was the puppet master, holding all the strings. A careful tug here, and turn of the handles there, and things went almost exactly how she wanted them to.

There were three exceptions.

The first was Hawks, who had miraculously disappeared one day after his training. He was most certainly in no state to move, according to his handlers, and camera footage held that to be true. He was apparently lugged out by two individuals, one tall and the other exceptionally short. They had carefully never shown their faces, but she had a good and relatively clear picture of the tops of their heads, and one was incredibly curly. The other had an outward and obvious mutation that gave him multiple arms. A quick search of the quirk database only came up with some kid, someone who was 11, nowadays, but that made no sense, so they were probably looking at a criminal who was completely off the record.

If she had to guess, she would assume they were tied to her second exception, All for One. The government had a tentative relationship with the man, since he could absolutely wipe them out if he wanted to and they really didn't want that to happen. In return for looking the other way on some of his more hidden crimes and the occasional hint at a villainous quirked child that would mysteriously disappear a week later, he would, for the most part, leave them alone. Of course, if he or any of his followers were blatantly caught doing something wrong, the Commission would have no choice but to punish him for that, but it was much easier on both sides to just cover things up.

Like his fight with All Might four years ago. All Might was one of the

few they had never been able to control, what with how popular he was, and someone had let slip to the buffoon that All for One was going to be there, the idiot. Of course, then the hero immediately plunged off to avenge his mentor, nearly getting himself killed. Sure, they didn't like him, btu he was useful in pushing their agenda and he was the poster boy of heroics.

The third exception was probably not as dangerous as All for One, but he was certainly not one to be trifled with, and that was Nedzu. An experiment that had broken out, it could never be revealed that the Commission had paid for said experimentation, but Ranyou had a sneaking suspicion that the rat knew anyway and was simply biding his time. When he fought for citizenship, they had no choice but to give it to him - he was smarter than everyone, every single lawyer they had. The Commission had made a hasty decision to offer him UA, their top hero school, so that he would have something to occupy his time that wasn't planning their demise. Maybe he'd find it amusing and wouldn't destroy them.

Plus, it kept an eye on him. He was in the public eye and couldn't exactly do anything rash, no matter that he had a hero license, without the public knowing it. And if the public knew it, the Commission did, and that was something they could use to keep him in line. The animal hated being caged, so he wouldn't risk that.

When her third exception requested a meeting with her on the 15th of July, she reluctantly cleared her schedule and sent back a confirmation. Hopefully it would be something silly, like changing the entrance exam again, or implementing a new program in something or other, and she could give him the usual reasons and send him away.

But if it was something like that, why didn't he just send an email?

Her phone rang and she picked it up.

“Miss, Mr. Nedzu is here.”

“Send him up.”

“And he-”

She hung up, not really catching those last words, lost in her head. She threaded her fingers together and rested her elbows on the table while she stared at the door. About a minute from the lobby to her door, so any moment now.

The door opened and she stood, ready to greet him, but the words died in her throat as a curly green head poked in.

“Kid, how did you-”

“Oh no, forgive me, President, he’s with me! I had assumed your secretary would warn you, but alas!”

Nedzu came in right behind the literal child who was only about 6 inches taller than the animal and hauled himself up onto a chair.

The boy bowed, and she startled, almost missing his name.

“Midoriya Izuku, ma’am, nice to meet you!”

She knew that head of curls.

She stiffly sat back down in her chair. “Seijito Ranyou, President of the Hero Public Safety Commission. What is this meeting about…?”

Nedzu smiled as the boy sat in the other seat, pulling out a folder she hadn’t seen him carrying.

The green headed boy grinned, all sharp.

“We are here to reach an understanding!”

She didn’t like how he said that word.

She raised an eyebrow. “An understanding? Do tell, little boy.”

His smile faltered slightly, but he continued. “Well, you see, my name is Midoriya Izuku, but you might recognize me better by my pen name.” His eyes flashed, making them poisonous.

“Greenbean.”

He nodded, all smiles, and she felt her heart beat faster. This was about to go very, very wrong.

“You see, Ms. President,” he hummed, “a few of my articles got, well, taken down. Censored, if you will, by your people.”

She swallowed, trying to remain calm. “I can assure you, none of *my* people would limit the press like that-”

“So this signed order wasn’t from you? Is there another President Seijito I don’t know of?”

Her eyes flicked to the folder, where the boy was looking, but she couldn’t see inside. How the fuck had a kid gotten a copy of-

Her eyes shot over to the grinning *rat* .

“There has been a misunderstanding.”

The boy nodded graciously. “You’re right, there has!”

For a moment, she breathed easier.

“We aren’t just here for talk, we’re here for compensation.”

Damn it.

She sighed, pursing her lips. “We can release a public statement, apologizing for retracting the articles, of course. We merely wanted to keep society stable.”

He grinned. “Ah, did you? But no, that’s not what we want, honest.”

She tensed, fidgeting in her leather backed chair. Funny, it usually makes her feel so important; right now, she feels like a kid in the principal's office getting scolded. She feels small.

"And what do you want?"

He hummed, as if he was considering, but he had absolutely come prepared with what he wanted.

"Two things, really. The first is simple, stop pulling my research findings," oh, was that what they were calling them now, "and eventually the public will forget the government ever tried to censor me!"

Easy enough.

"The second, well, is that you turn over any heroes under the Top 50."

She narrowed her eyes. "Hand over?"

He nodded. "Let me dig up their scandals that you have covered up, and stop covering them up in general so that they can see justice. The people deserve that."

"And it would make excellent news," she muttered bitterly.

The boy shrugged. "I only publish the truth. The only opinion piece I

ever published was the one on strong quirks, but I do like to stick to informational pieces if I can. Gives me more credibility."

She ground her teeth. "Is that all?"

He smiled. "Yep! Now, if you could sign both of these contracts, stating you agree to the terms-"

"Contracts?!"

He nodded, eyes wide and innocent. "Yes, it's the same contract both times, a copy for you and a copy for me, so we have a legally binding agreement. Nedzu has agreed to be our witness, and I have permission from my mother to enter into a contract at this age, but don't worry! My part of the contract says that I will never target a hero above the Top 50, and I won't call the Commission out for censoring the press and free speech!"

He leaned forward with wide eyes, looking concerned. "Imagine if the public found out what you had done… I don't think your people would ever hear the end of it…"

She risked a glance a Nedzu, but the fucking rat was just sitting there serenly, watching this all play out.

"Fine," she snapped, "give me the contracts."

He smiled and handed her two sheets of paper. She was tempted to rip them up, but who knows what the kid would do then, let alone the rodent. She snatched a pen off the cup on her desk and skimmed the contract.

The details were laid out exactly as he said. He wouldn't go after the Top 50, he wouldn't accuse the HPSC of what they had done, and in return, no one affiliated with the HPSC or the government could seek to take down his articles, and they would no longer cover up the crimes, big or small, of any hero under the Top 50.

She signed both papers.

"Great," the kid chirped, sliding one back into the folder and snapping it closed, "then I think we're all done here!"

They both got up to leave, Nedzu having said nothing past claiming the boy as his own.

"Wait."

They both looked back just as they reached the door.

"Where is Hawks?"

The brat had the audacity to blink and cock his head. "Who?"

"I know you took him," she hissed, "so where is he?"

He shook his head. "I'm sorry, I don't know anyone called Hawks. Did you lose a pet bird?"

She pursed her lips. “Fine, but we *know* , and we *will* get him back.”

He grinned. “Best of luck.”

The door shut behind them and she flopped into her chair, looking at the damn contract.

…There were four exceptions.

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Keigo immediately pounced on Izuku as soon as he stepped into the teachers’ lounge.

“How did it go?!”

Izuku waved the folder, revealing the single piece of paper inside. “We got a signed contract! I am free to publish and if they take down any articles, we will destroy them!”

He sounded way too cheerful to be saying such a thing, but Keigo really didn’t care. “How the hell did you get her to sign? She’s a hardass.”

Nedzu chuckled. “A clever ploy by Izuku - he looked up government regulations and bluffed.”

Keigo looked at the cheekily grinning boy. “You bluffed the president
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of the Hero Commission, and you were successful? Holy shit, Zuks, you're insane."

"Thank you," the boy gave an exaggerated bow, "I really am."

"What did you even use to bluff her?"

Nedzu chuckled. "Like I said, a general knowledge of government regulations goes a long ways…"

Izuku beamed. "To remove an article, you need a signed order from a higher up legalizing you to do it. Sure, it doesn't look good to the public, but they generally don't know. Because it's not something they do often, you *have* to get a signed order, to be absolutely sure, because if word gets out, it could be disastrous. I told her we found a copy of this order form and we would release it to the public!"

"And she bought it?"

Izuku shrugged. "Peanut butter?"

Keigo paused for a moment before doubling over. "Holy shit, you lied to the president and got away with it! Zuks, you are *batshit!* "

He giggled. "Thanks, Keigo!"

Nedzu chuckled. "On a slightly more worrisome note, they identified Izuku from what I can only assume to be security footage, and thus have connected him to your disappearance. If you wish, we can have

Dabi attend to the phone more often, so they do not catch on, as it were."

Keigo shook his head. "Nah, no need. It's not like they can just bust in here, and I'm pretty sure the teachers would riot if they tried. Plus, with any luck, they won't notice the loophole Zuks put in the contract until he's already published the article and they burn themselves to the ground."

Nedzu nodded. "Quite so! That means it is my turn to make a move!"

Izuku smiled and looked up at Keigo. "Don't worry, we'll be ready to make a solid move within the year!"

Keigo grinned and ruffled his hair. "No rush, Greenie, taking down the government is hard work!"

He giggled. "For some!"

Chapter End Notes

can anyone tell me the loophole they bouta use to destroy the commission? ;)

A Plan Set In Motion

Chapter Summary

we see what nedzu is up to

Chapter Notes

special thanks to my girlfriend/wife and beta reader for giving me all these wonderful people! I came up with literally one of these names!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

[REDACTED]: is this Shikaku?

[Shikaku_J]: who is this

[REDACTED]: would you say you dislike your job?

[Shikaku_J]: this is the work chat, so you must be someone internal. Not falling for this, HR

[REDACTED]: oh no, I can assure you that I am not in the commission

[REDACTED]: I would go as far to say I am against the commission!

[REDACTED]: you recently had a certain paper pass your desk, to check for legality, I believe, signed by the president and a journalist

[REDACTED]: and I know you haven't had the chance to put it in the system, bury it under dead links, and call it "public" as all company contracts are legally required to be, so you might be wondering how I know this, seeing as it has only been through three people in the Commission, one of which was the president and another was yourself

[Shikaku_J]: i'm assuming you're this third person, then?

[REDACTED]: oh no, not in the slightest! I am a third party

[REDACTED]: not an impartial one, of course

[Shikaku_J]: what's your game

[REDACTED]: my original question, my dear clerk!

[REDACTED]: would you say you dislike your job?

[Shikaku_J]: yeah but my contracts almost up and it pays well anyway

[REDACTED]: if I offered you an opportunity to, perhaps, rebel, and end your contract early, earning you the respect you deserve, would you be interested?

[Shikaku_J]: this feels like a scam

[REDACTED]: I understand why you might think that

[REDACTED]: very well

[REDACTED]: I am Nedzu!

[REDACTED]: I'm sure you've heard of me :)

[Shikaku_J]: commission enemy number one, huh?

[Shikaku_J]: so why come to me?

[Shikaku_J]: i'm a low level clerk who everyone dumps their shit on

[REDACTED]: precisely!

[REDACTED]: how many classified documents would you say cross your desk, despite you not having the clearance?

[Shikaku_J]: too fucking many

[REDACTED]: how delightful!

[REDACTED]: how would you feel about making a deal?

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Yamada Hizashi got waved in by Keigo, their secretary of many months who occasionally stopped in to heroics classes and was definitely flirting with the janitor, he was getting off track, none of that was important right now. He opened the door to Nedzu's office to see the diminutive principal typing on his computer.
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Ominous!

"Ah, Yamada," he sat back, gesturing to a seat and grinning, "good of you to join me! As you might be aware by now, Izuku and I have been working on a project, and we are at the stage where it is a good idea to get people on board, as it were, and to inform them as to what is to come!"

Hizashi swallowed, feeling sweat on his forehead. If Izuku was involved, it wouldn't be that bad, right?

"A-And what project would this be?"

Nedzu's grin got a little sharper and he chuckled.

"Why, world domination!"

~~~~~

"Excuse me? Asuma Kintachi?"

The man tensed. "That depends," he muttered, not turning around quite yet, "who's asking?"

There was a chuckle and he forced himself to turn around. He almost dropped his groceries in surprise.

There were two people there, one only legally. The shorter of the two
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was easy to recognize to anyone who knew anything, especially in Kintachi's line of work. Standing at under three feet, dressing in a suit and sneakers, pale white fur and a scar over his eye, was Nedzu.

He examined the other person, still short compared to normal adult standards, but not overly so. His hands were in the pockets of his tan jacket, and his blond hair was pushed under a baseball cap, sunglasses covering the bottom half of golden eyes.

"Hey," he greeted, "it's been what, ten years?"

A single red feather poked out of his jacket and waved.

Kintachi paled. "Ke-Keigo? You, you…"

The man (boy, this was a *boy*) grinned. "Yeah, you never did get in the habit of calling me Hawks, did you? Guess that's why they transferred you. Only name I actually remember, only one I ever wanted to. You look good, Asuma!"

"How, how did you-?"

Nedzu hummed. "A mutual friend discovered him and removed him from his living situation, but that is not why we came to talk to you today!"

Kintachi straightened up. "I had no choice, you have to believe me-"

"Relax," Keigo held up his hands, "it's not about that. Well, it kind of

is, but it's nothing bad, trust me. We just want to see if we can maybe… help each other out."

"What do you mean?"

"Well," Nedzu chirped, "why don't you take those groceries home, and we can talk there?"

He shook his head. "If you want to get listened to, sure. I'm sure you know that all Commission workers deemed a risk are never quite alone."

"I did not! More things to add to the list, I suppose! Is there a place we can meet? I imagine our offer will be quite appealing to you, what with what happened to Keigo here, and what you no doubt see in your new position."

He tensed. "It's been a decade. Why come now? Why wait all this time to make your move?"

Nedzu smiled and Keigo chuckled.

"Because," the principal said, "I finally have a complete plan! Now, Clerk of Finance, what do you say? Do you wish to get back at them?"

Kintachi clenched and unclenched his jaw.

"…Yes, I think I do. What can I do?"

“Wonderful!” Nedzu clapped his paws together. “Then, to start, do you know how much money they are embezzling and from where?”

He chucked humorlessly. “Do I know? I can probably give you the details from memory alone. I can arrange a meeting with your budgeting department, just send me an invoice and I guess I’ll just *have* to come myself, such a shame…”

Keigo snickered. “Oh yeah, Zuks will like you, Asuma. See you soon!”

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“You want to take over the world?”

Nedzu nodded sagely. “Of course, it began as a joke, but Izuku helped point out flaws in society and then offer interesting solutions. I couldn’t help looking into my tentative plans with him, and, well, we are looking to make them a reality. I hope you won’t oppose me in this, Aizawa.”

Shouta dragged a hand down his face. “Of course the Problem Child has something to do with this. When is this going to start?”

“At the earliest, right after Izuku turns 14, at the latest, what would usually be his second semester here.”

“So you’re saying this school will cease to exist.”
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“On the contrary,” Nedzu chuckled, “I intend for it to persist for a good long while! Of course, with me helping Izuku run the country and eventually the world, I won’t be able to be the principal, so it will find itself under new management, someone I trust and have worked with for years, someone who cares about the next generation…”

Shouta groaned and rolled his eyes as Nedzu trailed off. “Please no.”

“Are you saying you aren’t interested in the position? I assumed you wanted no part of the government, but if that’s not the case-”

“No, I definitely do not want to be in your government. You and the Problem Child are going to become dictators, I do not need to be associated with that when you inevitably get assassinated.”

Nedzu chuckled. “You say that as if it is a foregone conclusion, but you underestimate how thorough our plans are!”

“And how are you planning on getting rid of the current government? The Commission barely tolerates you as it is, and you aren’t exactly a well known political figure. No one would be fine with you just causing anarchy and then declaring yourself Emperor, or whatever.”

“Ah, but you see, that is also included in the plans! Still, I would like to know that you at least will not oppose me, even if you do end up turning down the position.”

Shouta sighed. “I will admit, society needs change. If you can bring that about without going off the deep end and becoming a mass murderer, then sure. But,” he activated his quirk with a glare, “if you cross the line…”

“Of course!” Nedzu was as cheerful as ever. “You have a certain duty as a hero, I understand. Tea?”

Shouta grunted. “No.”

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“Oi.”

Houkigusa stopped against common sense at the voice that came out of the alley.

He relaxed. “Ah, Dabi, how are you? Hope you’re not doing anything shady in this dark alley…”

The teenager chuckled and walked out of the shadows. “Nah, just wanted to talk to you, one janitor to another.”

“The union giving you trouble?”

The scarred boy held up his hands. “Nothing like that; nothing to do with the union, but you know they don’t like me, working at UA.”

Houkigusa snorted. “A janitor is a janitor, just because you get some pretty good benefits doesn’t mean you don’t need the union. Who knows, maybe they’re the only thing keeping UA from docking your pay?”
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“Heh, yeah. Anyway, just had some questions.”

“Course! Need more tips?”

“Nah, your old ones are still working great.”

“Ah, kissing the boy in the closet, are you?”

He sputtered, blush showing through the partially red and marred skin. “No! That’s not - stop!”

Houkigusa chuckled. “Sure, sure, everyone’s done it at least once. What can I do for you?”

Dabi sighed. “You know how you’re always talking about how you hate your job?”

“No no, not my job, I love being a janitor, it’s just where I *work* .”

“Right, you hate where you work. Death Arms Agency, right? What was it called, Sucker Punch?”

He snorted through his scowl. “Dumb name for a dumb place. God, if anyone would listen to a janitor, the amount of dirt I have on that whole damn agency… But no! Who’d believe the broom boy over the heroes! No one!”

Dabi cocked his head. “I think I might know a guy.”

He stopped and blinked. “…You do?”

The teenager grinned. “Yeah, and they’d love to hear *any* dirt, on *any* heroes. Interested?”

Houkigusa considered the young janitor he had taken under his wing all those months ago.

“Consider me interested!”

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Maijima sighed. “So you finally snapped.”

Nedzu chortled around his tea. “I did not snap, my good sir, I simply finally had what I had been missing!”

“The little green kid.”

“Indeed! Someone so human, yet on my level of intelligence, was just what I needed to finalize my plan, the last part to make everything click! You understand; all the gears are finally in place!”

“And why are you telling me?”
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“Why, two things, of course. One is non-negotiable, and that is that you do not oppose us.”

“And the other?”

“Are you willing to work with us? You know support and it’s laws like no one else, and I am afraid I do not possess the knowledge in this regard that you do. We would be rewriting the law, of course, fixing all the little errors that led society down this path.”

Maijima frowned. “What path?”

“The path of heroes, villains, and how they both came to pass.” Nedzu sighed. “How terrible, that humans would fight other humans for traits they cannot control. I suppose they have always been doing that, even before quirks, but the laws do not protect the ones who need it. As Izuku said, we must change society, so quirks do not matter nearly as much as the strength of one’s character and their abilities.”

“…I’m willing to work with you on one condition.”

“I am willing to hear you out!”

“I want control of support laws. All of them.”

Nedzu grinned. “Of course! Good to have you aboard!”

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Itachi Tengue was corrupt.

He knew it, his friends knew it, probably the dog down the street knew it.

It wasn't a well kept secret within the government and the Commission in particular, but the public of course had no idea, and he was very disarming when he wanted to be.

Not literally, of course, his quirk didn't removes people's arms or weapons, but he was charming and personable, he knew how to talk to people and weasel his way into their good graces just long enough to get what he wanted and then leave them confused as to what they had just done.

Also not his quirk.

His quirk was called Trusting Smile, and it planted the seed in people's heads that they should trust him. Of course, anything he did after that would determine if they actually *did* , but that's besides the point. He was very good at that part, it was why he had become a politician in the first place!

His… benefactors were well invested in him, and he, in turn, helped invest in him! When they wanted a bill passed, he sped it through, expediting it's journey and padded the right pockets to make sure the votes would swing in his favor.

He's been in office for many years, having many successful campaigns and never letting anyone see the darker parts of him. It was easy to lull the public into trusting him; just flash them a smile, give them

some platitudes, cite his long term in office and how great things had been going, and boom, votes.

The darker parts of him, of course, were where he had the most fun. What was the point in having all this bribe money if he didn't spend it on something? He could spend it on a big house, a fancy car, and all the prostitutes he could want, but eventually people would ask where he got all that money, as his persona as your humble neighborhood politician of the people would go up in smoke.

He had to live in modest means, splurging here and there, but he couldn't just spend his hard earned money without compromising himself.

At least, he couldn't *publicly* spend his money.

Black market dealings were of course on the table; undercover ways to spend his money that couldn't be traced by their very nature, and no one would know it was him.

It started with the fighting rings. They were illegal, of course, especially the ones where quirks were allowed, but that was the thrill! Bet on them, scream and yell with all the peons and other corrupt people, and if you won, great, more money to spend, and if you lost? Well, drop in the barrel.

Then it went to drug dealing and trades, getting drugs for people in exchange for favors, and in some cases, votes. His political rival found himself arrested for having copious amounts of Trigger. He claimed he had never seen it, of course, but their constituents knew the truth. Would Itachi Tengue lie to them?

No! Never!

Then it got deeper. Nothing was enough. He asked around for what the biggest high was that you could get without actually doing drugs. He knew what drugs did, he wasn't about to chase that.

That's how he found out about the trafficking ring.

He didn't go often, only when he had a rock solid alibi and knew no one could possibly discover him. Sometimes he would give them money for their endeavors, become one of their sponsors, and sometimes he would see something he liked and buy. A quick clean up afterwards by all the people who owed him favors, and he would be satisfied in more ways than one.

No one should have been able to find out.

No one should have known.

So why did he have this email?

It wasn't from anyone he knew. He didn't recognize the address, and no one else knew either. He was in a rage, thinking he had been betrayed, and he emailed back, asking what they wanted, what their demands were to keep this quiet.

All he got sent back was a smile.

Itachi Tengue was corrupt, he knew it, but it didn't fully sink in until he was in cuffs, being led away to a police station for questioning by the famous Lie Detector Detective. He could feel the eyes of people

behind the mirror, and he screamed at them, knowing whoever sent the email was there, mocking him.

He was sent to prison in a straight jacket.

“Well,” Nedzu hummed, “how does your first kill feel, Shikaku?”

The man stretched. “Drop in the barrel.”

Tsukauchi sighed. “So I’m going to be doing this more? God, Nedzu, when you said you were dismantling the government, I didn’t know you meant one person at a time.”

“Oho,” Nedzu chuckled, “soon it will all come crashing down, but we must lay the groundwork. Izuku has been a big help, but it is time to do mine. Remind me of his position in office again? It seems they need a new whatever it is, and I have been meaning to get into politics!”

Shikaku laughed, and Tsukauchi sighed.

This was only the beginning.

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“Nedzu, why did you call this emergency meeting?”

Nedzu hummed from where he was standing on the chair at the head
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of the table.

“I’m sure you all know.”

The teachers exchanged glances and Aizawa slammed his head into the table. “You told everyone?”

“Well, I wanted everyone on board! Consider this a war meeting, if you will!”

Kayama fidgeted. “So we’re really doing this? It’s not a joke?”

Cementoss sighed. “It’s Nedzu, he wouldn’t go to these lengths for a joke.”

“Yes, he would,” Snipe muttered.

Ectoplasm nodded.

“Well,” Nedzu said, “I am grateful you all decided to back me and Izuku. Now, let’s take over the world!”

Chapter End Notes

and so it officially begins

only name that has a meaning is Houkigusa which is the plants you use to make brooms

#JanitorUnion

An End of the Beginning

Chapter Summary

everything comes to a head and things have officially begun.

Chapter Notes

:)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

How far are you willing to go to get the best heroes?

To us, heroes mean safety, and that everything is going to be ok. To villains and criminals, they mean that your time is up, and it's time to face the consequences of your actions.

But how far are we willing to push them to get the results we want?

As I have already said before, we view strong quirks as a one way ticket to herodom. We eliminate all other options for them in the name of adding another hero or sidekick to the Commission's payroll, another person to fight for popularity by being the best, most flashy, and most well loved.

Would you go further?

Would you train these children from a young age, working them harder than a child should have to?

Would you pull them out of school to train them all day long, thinking that education is pointless and won't help them be a better hero?

Would you take away their individuality, get them to focus on the civilians and only the civilians?

Would you have them up at the crack of dawn and down late into the night, to make the most of your time?

To most, these things sound horrific, as they should. For all we love heroes and strong quirks, there comes a line you don't cross, not with children, not with people.

And yet, someone has.

It is not a parent with their child.

It is not a family member at all.

It's our own dear Hero and Public Safety Commission.

This is the story of my friend Keigo.

When he was five, an agent took an interest in him and his quirk, and offered his poor parents a substantial amount of money to essentially buy the boy. They agreed in a heartbeat to the large sum that to the Commission was chump change, and Keigo was swept away, never to be seen by the public for another thirteen years.

He was trained, day in and day out, by handlers he didn't know the

name of, all except one. This anonymous handler let Keigo sleep when he was tired, rest his bruises when they hurt too much to move, and treated him like a person. Without this handler, Keigo would have broken.

And then the Commission transferred them, saying they "weren't getting results fast enough" and were "being too soft on the subject." Subject, because in the eyes of the Commission, he wasn't a person, not anymore.

Keigo forgot his name. They called him Hawks, what would be his chosen hero name, and in time, that became the only thing he knew. He didn't know who Keigo was, he was Hawks.

He trained, day in a day out, far beyond what a normal person would do. As a result, he's shorter than he was projected to be, the intense physical labor stunting his growth.

I'll spare you the more gruesome details of what he had to go through, but his life became hell. He would train his body and his quirk, to be perfect, he would train on civilian interactions, he would train on mental fortitude so he wouldn't cave under torture.

All before he was even eighteen years old.

According to him, when he turned eighteen, he was supposed to debut. Analysis said he would likely climb to the top ten within two years, making him the youngest hero to make it there, and most certainly the fastest climber.

So, all of that for a top ten hero.

Would it have been worth it?

Would sacrificing years off a child's life have been worth it for another hero?

Keigo is now twenty, living in hiding for fear the Commission will try and take him back. He can't walk around the streets without a disguise, so chances are you might have seen him and not even realized. The people who helped him escape, bringing out his unconscious and broken body from the cell he was staying in, have provisions in place to help him.

He would make a fantastic hero. I don't think anyone who knows him would doubt that. When he was allowed to show personality, he opened up and is a joy to be around, if a danger for the amount of puns and wisecracks. He has mastery of his quirk that is unparalleled.

And he has no desire to be a hero.

It might seem strange; who doesn't want to be a hero these days? They get fame, glory, money, and recognition.

But his desire to be a hero has been killed.

Maybe in a few years, he says, if the Commission gets under new management or has way more restrictions, he'll consider it. But for now, he can't even think about it without remembering that place.

So I'll ask again: how far are you willing to go to get the best heroes?

-Greenbean

~~~~~

Seijito Ranyou was fuming.

“Get that article taken down, now!”

“But ma’am,” some worthless peon said, “the contract forbids it. He’s probably counting on that.”

“Bring me the contract,” she growled, gritting her teeth, “I’m sure I can find a way the little shit broke it!”

“It’s been thoroughly reviewed. Since Hawks was not a hero, and not in the top 50, and since he did not comment on the Commission taking down his articles, he has operated completely within the bounds of the contract.”

She screamed in fury.

~~~~~

The flash of cameras hurt his eyes, but he kept a pleasant smile. “And since I will be running for office, while I will not be stepping down, I will be hiring a vice principal to manage affairs while I am out and get ready for the transition if I do happen to get elected for the position! I won’t be leaving UA alone, of course; it’s my pride and joy! But recent news has brought certain things to light I cannot abide, and I

would like to be a part of the process to change them. Are there any questions?"

"Nedzu! DO you have someone in mind for the position already, and if so, who?"

He smiled. "Of course! I do not go forward with plans until I have all the pieces on the board! As for who, we will be maintaining the standard of only having pro heroes make up our staff. Aside from that, I will not say."

"Nedzu! Given your history, how do you feel about the subject of Greenbean's most recent article?

His grin got a little sharper. "I might perhaps be one of the most qualified to understand what it is young Keigo had to go through, and my heart goes out to the boy, wherever he may be. It was the driving force to finally push me to attempt a hand at government."

"Nedzu! What are your plans for if you do get elected to office?"

Nedzu hummed. "I'm so glad you asked!"

~~~~~

Mezou wandered the streets, Shuichi at his side. Between the two of them, they could take care of themselves, despite being 12 and 17. Shuichi was a couple months away from having his provisional medical license, having been helped quite a bit by his continued time at UA with Recovery Girl, but still, no one would even think about hiring him, even with that kind of credential on his record.
~~~~~

“Hey,” the lizard man called out to a woman on the street, “did you hear the news?”

She stopped and narrowed her six eyes, but softened when she realized they were mutants like her. “What are young boys like you doing out this late? It’s dangerous, you know.”

Mezou nodded. “We know. We were just happy about the news.”

She cocked her head, two of her eyes blinking. “That’s the second time you’ve mentioned it. What news?”

Shuichi took over. “Nedzu is running for office, and his position is in strong support of intense discrimination laws.”

She sighed and shook her head, mandibles clicking together a few times. “When you’re 40 like me, you’ll know that’s what every politician says. It never amounts to anything more than vote pandering.”

“But it’s Nedzu. I mean, I think a lot of people don’t even consider him human. He gets us, ya know?”

She cocked her head. “I… I suppose you’re right. Do you really think he means it?”

Mezou shrugged, rolling his shoulders. “I guess we’ll just have to keep watching him to be sure, but he’s certainly better than Old Itachi.”

She snorted. “Good riddance for him, I say. God, what an awful man. Anyone will be better than him.” She considered it for a moment. “Still, there’s hope yet. I’ll keep an eye on this Nedzu and my friends will do the same. Now run along home, you know it’s dangerous for us when it gets dark.”

The two nodded and waved her goodbye.

“Well,” Shuichi sighed, “that’s the tenth one tonight. We’re a tight-knit community, so word should spread. That’s a solid percent of the population on our side.”

Mezou nodded. “Let us hope outreach in other groups has been the same.”

~~~~~

“No shit?”

Izuku nodded, beaming, and Natsuo grinned.

“Hell yeah,” the Todoroki ruffled Izuku’s curls, “this kid is whip smart and is definitely going to make it big one day. Hell, you seen the views on his articles? He’s the real deal!”

The man stroked his chin and turned to address Izuku. “You talk a lot of big game, son. With your opinions, times are changing. Public opinion is changing, and for the better, I imagine. Fancy that, a quirkless kid doing all that to disrupt the order?”
~~~~~

The man guffawed and slapped his knee. “You do us old folks proud, sonny! You give a good name to quirkless folk everywhere, and we’re proud to call you one of our own. Keep doing what you’re doing, and make this a better world for our grandchildren, eh?”

Izuku beamed. “Of course! When I’m done, quirks won’t matter!”

He chuckled. “I believe it. And you, old man.”

Natsuo pointed at himself in confusion.

“Yeah, you with the white hair. I hope those white hairs aren’t from stress!”

“Uh, no, I got it from my mom.”

“Good,” he nodded, “now you take care of this boy, alright?”

“Pretty sure he can take care of me, to be honest with you.”

The old man waved his hand. “You’re older, it’s your job to mentor the youth. Keep him safe for us, eh?”

Natsuo agreed, choosing not to mention that Izuku regularly helped him with his own school work, and was definitely the mentor in this relationship.

~~~~~

Hitoshi leaned back in his desk chair. Honestly, he had the best job. The others had to do ground work and actually go meet people in person, Hitoshi just had to go on his regular forums. He was well known, to a degree, since he had started posting helpful resources after Izuku had added him to the gang of misfits and could readily supply them, so most people took what he said at face value.

Which was handy when you were talking about Nedzu supporting people with “villainous” quirks.

No one called them that outside of quotation marks, since they all knew no quirk was villainous (Greenbean’s articles got reposted on the forum constantly), but they all related on a spiritual level to the bullying.

Convincing them was pretty easy. Just a few links to the interviews, to his campaign webpage, and to a brief history on Nedzu and the discrimination he had faced, and pretty much everyone was in agreement.

Nedzu would fight for them, even when no one else would.

Himiko had an account too, and she would gush, super excited about some of Nedzu’s proposed laws. One thread turned into people talking about how they had been discriminated against and how a particular law would change that.

There was some overlap with the mutant community too, some being seen as villainous for having a strange or “scary” appearance, and they sang his praises too.
~~~~~

Really, Hitoshi had the easiest job.

~~~~~

Ochako knew she and Blasty had the hardest job, probably. They were the only people in the group that had quirks considered normal, or heroic. The latest article about keigo definitely helped public opinion sway in their favor, but those who benefited from the system were hesitant to change it. After all, it worked for them!

Which meant they had the job of reinforcing that old article on quirks, to articulate how it *didn't* work for them. Keigo's article could not have come at a better time, because now they had a solid, concrete example of how having a strong quirk can also hurt you. It never specified his quirk in the article (and a lot of people online were speculating based on his given hero name) but it was heavily implied to be useful.

To make things better, major heroes were endorsing the article, speaking out against the Commission for what they had done. Ryukyu, number nine, had called the actions "abhorrent and frankly morally reprehensible," which set the internet ablaze with criticisms about the Commission. The more extreme speakers called for a complete dissolution of the Commission, which was incredibly exciting.

Ochako wasn't stupid, she knew what the end goal here was. The government was hurting people, people Izuku couldn't help but care about.

And anyone who hurts what Izuku considers his?
~~~~~

Well, Aldera had been shut down as soon as she and Blasty moved up to middle school. The whole chain of Aldera schools was under completely new management and the school board had all been replaced. It was a quiet dismantling, but it was satisfying all the same.

Neither of them really missed it.

Now, with Nedzu actively campaigning and reinforcing Izuku's points from his articles, public opinion was swaying, and in their favor.

Ochako couldn't wait to see everyone like the people who had hurt Himi get absolutely obliterated!

~~~~~

Dabi sighed, wrapping his arms a little tighter around his bird.

"Dabi, look, everyone hates the Commission now."

He laughed lightly, breath ruffling blond hair. "They sure do. These people don't even know you and they're rooting for you."

Takami tilted his head back with a smile. "Too bad they can't possibly compete with my biggest fan and supporter."

Dabi raised an eyebrow. "No one can compete with Little Green."
~~~~~

A taloned hand smacked him lightly and he snorted. “Watch the claws, I don’t want to be shish kebabed.”

“If you die, you die.”

“Cold.”

“Well, since you’re so hot, *someone* has to be.”

They both paused and Takami turned as red as his feathers. “I-I mean, you run hot! Because of your quirk! You’re warm! Temperature wise, you’re hot!”

Dabi buried his laughter in his boyfriend’s hair. “Don’t worry Birdie, I know you just love me for being your space heater.”

Takami huffed. “Whatever. Come here, punk.”

Dabi grinned and leaned down.

It was a good day, for everyone.

Everyone but the Commission, of course.

Chapter End Notes

:)))

A Blond, a Nervous Wreck, and a Fairy Walk into a Bar

Chapter Summary

…or rather, a library

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

It was break day, where they let the public and their friends rest and ruminate on things or whatever. Nedzu was still busy with politics stuff, which meant Izuku, officially a teenager as of a couple months ago, was free to roam UA to do as he wished.

Of course, teachers and upperclassmen had long since gotten used to him, not that anyone has ever told the media. They made it a joke to not tell anyone until they came to school. People would sometimes stop him and ask if he was supposed to be there, and he distracted them by talking about their quirks (he does a profile on the school as a whole with every year, for practice) and then smiling and leaving when they're confused. Next time he sees that student, he just waves, and continues whatever he's doing.

Most people don't ask twice, but it is a pretty good prank to the upperclassman, so Izuku let it go.

He was sitting in the library with a game of Connect Four. It wasn't a difficult game, per se, but he was playing against himself, not anyone else, so it was pretty challenging anyway. He always knew what yellow was planning, but he also knew what red was planning. It was a horrible cycle of trying to trap himself and eluding his own traps.

"Hey there, little guy! What are you doing?"

He looked up from his almost stalemate game to see what looked to be a first year, blond hair, blue eyes.

Doing a mental catalogue, he pinned him.

“Oh, hello Mirio Togata.”

The boy just laughed. “Wow, the rumors were true! You’re pretty funny!”

Izuku grinned and cocked his head. “It’s not often people call that funny.”

Mirio nodded sagely, fighting to keep back a grin. “I knew what to expect coming in, but I’m wondering if you figured out my quirk!”

“What makes you think I haven’t just looked at the files?”

“You’re playing Connect Four against yourself; something tells me you like a challenge.”

Izuku giggled. “Yeah, you’re right. But I still watched the entrance exams, so I think I have a pretty good idea.”

The older boy sat across from him at the table, still smiling. “Do your worst!”

“Well,” he started, “it’s some form of intangibility. Your clothes slip

off when you use it full body, so in the entrance exam you tended not to do that, but that means you can also make certain parts of your body tangible or not. If you had a costume or clothing made out of your own DNA, like your hair, you could avoid that issue and your clothes would work with your quirk, instead of against it. I'm curious, though, can you only pass through solids, or can you pass through liquids and gas as well?"

Mirio blinked and burst out laughing, getting himself shushed by the librarian. "Sorry," he whisper-yelled sheepishly, before turning back to Izuku. "Crazy! I call it Permeation, and pretty much everything you said was correct! And I can pass through liquids and gases too, which means I can't breathe while my torso is permeable, and I can't see while my head is. Pretty annoying!"

Izuku hummed. "How long can you hold your breath? I know air will literally pass out of your lungs, but if you can get better at absorbing oxygen before activating your quirk you'll probably last longer."

"Oh, oh! Mirio, are you making friends without us?"

Izuku blinked as a blue haired girl floated over, trailed by an incredibly nervous boy with pointed ears. Mirio laughed quietly.

"No, I'm just talking to the UA cryptid!"

She pouted. "That's worse! Real friends hunt cryptids together!"

The quiet boy glanced nervously at Izuku and murmured something the younger boy couldn't hear.

The girl beamed, floating above him still. “Hi there, cryptid! I’m Hado Nejire, but you should totally call me Nejire-chan! It’s nice to meet you! This guy is Amajiki Tamaki, he and Mirio have been friends for ages!”

Izuku waved at the shy boy and turned back to Nejire. “How does your quirk let you fly? I thought it was just energy spirals you could send out?”

She giggled. “Just like the stories! It’s something I learned how to do with practice!”

He nodded slowly. “Say, you three are in the hero course, right? First years?”

They all nodded.

“Why do you want to be a hero?”

Mirio chuckled. “I guess I got really inspired by All Might. I want to use my power to save a lot of people! Everyone, if I can, but I’m just one guy, you know? But anyway, I want to save people with a smile.”

Nejire hummed, perching on the edge of the table and swinging her feet. “I guess I want to be a hero to all the little girls like me who were told they’d be nothing more than a pretty face! Also to punch the meanies!”

Amajiki hid behind Mirio, but Izuku could hear his quiet mutter in the still air of the library.

“I want to protect people… and give them confidence.”

Izuku smiled. “All good answers. Have you been keeping up with the recent news about the Hero Commission?”

Nejire sighed. “It was a total bummer when it turned out they’re kind of terrible, but by the time that journalist posted the article, I had already gotten my acceptance letter to UA. God, it seems like so long ago, but it was only a few months, huh?”

Mirio nodded. “I still want to be a hero, but I hope things change.”

Nejire leaned forward. “What about you? Why’re you the cryptid who’s been here for like, so many years?”

Izuku grinned and slid the catcher out on the Connect Four grid, making the pieces clatter to the table.

“Beat me in a game and I’ll answer any questions you have!”

~~~~~

Amajiki played two games, Mirio seven, and Nejire eleven, but none of them were able to get even close to beating him.

“Hard to believe you’re two years younger than us,” Nejire grumbled after her ninth consecutive loss, “you’re playing on the fifth dimension compared to us.”
~~~~~

Izuku just laughed and said there would be more opportunities to beat him in a game. He'd even let them pick, if they wanted.

Mirio perked up at that.

"Tic Tac Toe?"

Izuku readily agreed.

Mirio never lost, but he was never able to get more than a draw.

"Dude! This is ridiculous!"

Old Maid? He figured out the odd card out on the second round.

Go Fish? His memory was impeccable, he knew what everyone had and was a master at card counting to guess for the cards they hadn't called yet.

War? It was a game of mostly luck anyway, but he still won.

Rock Paper Scissors? He knew human psychology like no other, it wasn't even a contest.

Finally, Mirio challenged him to a thumb wrestling match.

Izuku was fast, but Mirio was considerably bigger and bulkier, and he managed to pin down Izuku's thumb. The three of them crowed, the librarian long since giving up trying to keep them quiet. Izuku would bring him some cookies later to make up for it.

"Alright, Mirio, you can ask me one question!"

"Why do you want to be a hero?"

Izuku blinked in surprise. "What leads you to believe I want to be a hero?"

Mirio shrugged. "You care a lot, I can tell. You have a lot of drive and you wanted to know about us, so I want to know about you. If you don't want to be a hero, then I guess I can change my question to what do you want to do with your life?"

It was not the question Izuku had been expecting, but it was a pretty good one. What did he want? In some sense, he did still want to be a hero, just not one with a license, not one under the Commission and the current government.

"I guess… I want a world where people aren't judged because of a genetic mutation. Where no one is cast aside because of a power or lack of one, and people aren't forced into bubbles when they turn four, all other possibilities going away. I want a world where instead of people needing to turn to villainy to get by, we have programs in place to get them the help they need. I want *reform.* "

He paused before smiling. "And it's already working!"

They looked confused, but he slid the Connect Four box back onto the shelf he had taken it from and stretched.

“I’m pretty sure your free period ended about half an hour ago, but I give you guys a pass. If your teacher asks, just say you were with me.”

“Wait.”

The quiet worry made Izuku stop and turn back to Amajiki.

“What’s… what’s your name?”

Oh, he hadn’t ever introduced himself.

“Izuku,” he smiled, “the UA cryptid.”

He ducked out of the room before they could reply and hauled himself into an air vent, closing it just as they left, not seeing him in the otherwise completely empty hallway. On a whim, he followed them back to class, which was with Midnight.

“Midnight-sensei-”

“I know where you were, Nedzu already informed me. Don’t get caught up in any of that boy’s schemes.”

She snorted at their confused looks. “He’s Nedzu’s protégé and friend. Between the two of them, there’s no one smarter in the building, and you’d be wise to remember that. Now come on, you’re holding up class.”

Izuku slid silently through the vents to plop down in Nedzu’s office, sighing in contentment at the cushy beanbag chair directly beneath the vent. Nedzu wasn’t in, and Aizawa opened one eye from the other beanbag chair in the room, before slipping it closed again.

He liked them; they were good people.

~~~~~

Nedzu got elected to office and everything changed.

Suddenly, laws were getting passed that before had no chance of getting through committee. He gave perfectly logical arguments that no one could refute, and they were forced to vote accordingly. Mutants, weak quirks, and the quirkless were suddenly recognized. There was a hard crack down on schools to ensure antidiscrimination laws were actually being followed, and teachers and policemen were hired and fired rapidly.

On top of that, new articles came out from the now quite famous, yet still anonymous, Greenbean, dragging down sidekicks and any heroes under the top 50, holding them accountable according to the letter of the law, and other journals took up the mantle, cracking down on some of the top 50 as well. No one was quite sure why he never went after the top 50, but other journals were happy for the publicity from an untapped source.

People started to question heroes on their own, and more importantly,
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the Hero and Public Safety Commission. How could they let all these dastardly deeds go unnoticed and unchecked for so long? They kept releasing statements that they had *no idea* their heroes were doing this, but after the third or fourth one, and the story of Keigo constantly in the forefront of people's minds, people started to ignore them. They were calling for a complete overhaul of the commission staff and leadership, and some called for a complete dismantling of the entire thing.

They immediately pointed fingers at the well loved politician and non-practicing hero, Nedzu, but he kindly pointed out that if they abolished a fundamental part of the government, unsavory characters would swoop in in the anarchy. Still, reforms would be on the way, and funding would be stripped from them.

The next budget passed by the government had Commission funds cut in half, and they had to lay off many workers and close most of their private departments.

Seijito Ranyou resigned as president.

Soon, it was the year when Izuku and his friends would go to UA, but on the day of the entrance exam, they had other plans in store than going to school. They were all guaranteed spots if they wanted them, anyway.

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"All for One, sir!"

"Speak."
~~~~~

“They’re making their move.”

“Then we shall crush them like the bugs they are.”

~~~~~

“All for One has begun mobilizing his final forces. We must make the push to wipe him out. By my estimations, we should have our final battle here, in this district.”

“Very good. Let us prove we’re not afraid of the boogeyman, shall we?”

~~~~~

Kouji held up a finger serenely and smiled as a sparrow landed. He was spending the day in the park with his friends, final preparations in place. The bird on his finger tweeted and he nodded, typing with his phone, also in the hand with the bird, and stroking the little messenger’s head.

Everyone’s phones pinged and Izuku beamed at the boy. “Great! I’ll relay this location to our coalition of heroes!”

Dabi snorted. “Spymaster strikes again. God, what are you going to do when this is all over and the world is under Zu’s thumb? Our lives will be so boring.”

“I dunno,” Himi giggled, “we have to *start* with Japan! We’ll do it,

duh, but it's gonna take some time for the *world* , you know?"

Katsuki crunched a chip. "I bet two years."

Chako perked up, finger's in Himi's hair stopping for a moment as she broke into a grin. "A year and a half!"

Hitoshi didn't move from where his arm was covering his eyes. "Six months."

Neito scoffed. "It's 183 countries, not counting Japan. I doubt he can get in in six months, even with both him *and* Nedzu. One year, minimum."

Shouto hummed. "Four months."

"Did you even listen to me?!"

Izuku chuckled. "Come on, guys, it took us like, four years to get Japan, you are being way too confident. Plus, we need to show that our system works before we try to impose it wide-spread."

Mezou sighed. "Perhaps when you officially become Emperor of Earth, you'll actually be an adult."

"Yeah but Zuku'll still be short forever."

Izuku shoved the explosive boy, who squawked and threw a chip that

got lodged in Izuku's thick green curls, and everyone devolved into laughter. Even after all this time, Izuku had not grown much, barely hitting five feet, and it was a constant source of jokes.

Izuku sighed, leaning back with a grin and raising his bottle of sparkly juice they all had.

"To the future!"

Kouji smiled and raised his own bottle.

To the future.

Chapter End Notes

to the future indeed.

I don't think we have many chapters left - next chapter will be the final uprising and squashing of opposing parties, on both sides, and then I'm thinking 2-3 chapters tops until we have full control or the planet

A Staged Confrontation

Chapter Summary

The opposition gets removed

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

All for One was feeling confident.

To be entirely fair, that was his normal state; he had a lot to be confident about. He was about to wipe out the foolish competition and fully take over the underground, and then? Japan.

Of course, the groundwork had been partially laid out for him, with both the politician Nedzu and the journalist Greenbean. All for One still didn't know who the journalist really was, but then again, he hadn't put much work into finding out, so all in good time.

Today was the day he finally wiped those minor gangs and bygone yakuza off the map, once and for all. They had a lot of bravery, to oppose him for so long, chipping away at his pawns, but he still had his bishops, his rooks, and his knights to destroy them.

And Kurogiri was ensuring his king was well protected.

Even should All for One take a solid blow today, his weaknesses exploited, there was still young Tomura, who would be fine to take over his empire. Still, he would not be taken out by the worthless rabble they would be bringing to this battle - he had been chipping away at their forces ever since he heard they were rising against him.

They were foolish, and they would pay the price.

~~~~~

Akai Itami had the privilege of being second… third in command. Really, that Overhaul kid was second in command, but Itami was the liaison for the gangs to the yakuza, since most of them trusted him at this point.

He didn't like to sacrifice men, but he had volunteers to go kamikaze at the enemy. They knew they would die, but they were going to take out as many people as they could on the way.

So here they stood, at the final battlefield, with their strongest members. He knew they had weakened him significantly, and hopefully he would be underestimating their strength, but this was going to be a brutal battle, and they all knew it.

He watched hardened gang members looking at pictures before tucking them into their shirts, eyes bright. For many, this was the end, but they knew that those who survived would be free and they would have control of the underground.

The political scene had shifted significantly, and for once in their lives, they felt accepted by society.

Now all they had to do was remove the last cancer on the underground.

It was only 200 years overdue.
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They packed up the picnic and half of the group waved their goodbyes and their good lucks.

Keigo, Dabi, Izuku, Kouji and Mezou moved out.

Keigo was still disguised, but occasionally someone would give him a funny look and he'd wink. The article had been read at least 5 times by every single person in Japan, and there was a forum page online dedicated to "Keigo Sightings" so people had a pretty decent idea of what to look for by now, even with the red herrings the gang would put on the site every once in a while.

The train ride was quiet, Izuku humming to himself as he checked the quirk forums. The call for welfare programs was spreading, as per Greenbean's last article, and soon enough, Nedzu would propose it to the committees and their popularity would rise.

They were very, very close.

"Come on, Little Green, we're here. Time to watch the underbelly crumble."

Kouji called down several birds and spoke to them in quiet tones before nodding and releasing them.

"Armies in place," he signed, "and birds are set to mingle."
~~~~~

Izuku hummed and got out his phone, checking the locations of the hero coalition. “And we should have hero arrivals within half an hour. Plenty of time for them to wipe each other out.”

They all climbed up a three story building about a block away from the site of the fight when a shockwave sent them reeling.

“It’s started!” Izuku grinned.

He pulled out a tablet and booted up the app connected to the various cameras on the bird agents to watch.

He didn’t take pleasure in watching human death, and he wished this could have been avoided, but he just needed to wait for the heads of the snakes to be cut off, and then the heroes could move in without fear.

All for One and Overhaul were dangerous and he didn’t need his coalition getting more injured than they had to.

~~~~~

Miruko was mad she had to sit back and wait for the signal, but she liked the little kid, he kicked major ass, so she was willing to wait. She was of the opinion that even if this All for One guy could steal quirks, she could kick his ass before it became a problem. They had spent the last several weeks destroying his factories, helping out the other side where they could, and they didn’t seem so tough!
~~~~~

Then she watched him punch and destroy a hundred people.

Right, ok, there was a reason the boss was the boss.

Then the shitty golden eyes bird mask boy showed up and fucked up All for One's forces by himself and suddenly it was a Mexican Standoff between Overhaul and All for One.

There was a huge ass explosion and then they were given the green light to move in.

Miruko grinned wickedly and punched her hand.

"Time to fuck them up."

She dashed in, knocking people out left and right, starting on All for One's side, until she was face to face with a particular guy. She paused, narrowing her eyes. Something about this guy was familiar…

"Hey, who are you?"

The man startled. "Akai Itami, Silver Snakes."

Miruko grunted. "Ah, you. Boss said you're fine. Get your guys and get out of here, this fight is over."

He almost protested, super confused at who the "boss" was, but sent out his own alert and cleared out quick.

Boss had liked the guy, said he ran a tight ship and was a good example for gangs everywhere, so if he was spotted, to let him go. Done and done.

She heard a guttural scream and looked up just in time to see a misty guy and a fucking teenager looking upset by somehting before Edgeshot knocked them both the fuck out. Man, dude was pretty fun to hang around, he really took nobody's shit, and Miruko could respect that. The boss would decide what to do with those guys, they just had a job to do.

They were the only heroes who the boss trusted and had reached out to, which was super flattering, but of course people would trust Rumi, especially with Keigo backing her up. She knew the kid; they had both been a part of the same program, with her a few years older, and she was glad to see him looking good. He hadn't had the fierceness she did to put up with the Commission's bullshit, so she was glad the boss had gotten him out.

The coalition was made up of several heroes. The Pussycats, Edgeshot, Gang Orca, Best Jeanist, Ryukyu, Fatgum, Ms. Joke, Mr. Brave, Kesagiriman, and of course, Miruko and the UA teachers. All people who managed to avoid the scandals that a lot of heroes had, and hand picked by the boss. Rumi had no qualms about the fact that hero society as they knew it was going to come crumbling down, but she knew the boss would take care of them.

He was a real sweetheart, for being so ruthless to his enemies.

Speaking of, he was coming down the battlefield right now, carried by none other than Keigo.

“Hey birdie,” she crowed, “taxi service?”

He snorted. “Nice to see you too, Rumi.”

It was good to see him with his wings fully spread. There were little gold flecks and stripes she hadn’t seen before, and his eyes were sharper. His talons certainly were, on both his hands and feet, and he looked way more vibrant and dangerous, like a real bird of prey.

The boss looked around the area with a sad smile. “So much destruction… do you think Cementoss would be willing to help?”

She snorted. “He’s wrapped around your finger like the rest of the UA staff and is probably living in constant fear of you. I’m going to say yes.”

One of the criminals on the ground coughed and looked up at the kid. “Who… who are you?”

The boss hummed. “With a thousand lies, and a good disguise, hit em right between the eyes… You probably know me as Greenbean, and I’m the one who orchestrated this whole fight. The underground needed it’s key players taken out so they didn’t oppose me and my friend. We want a non hostile takeover, and we can’t have that with such strong opposition, so All for One and yakuza both had to take each other out. And they did, just like planned.”

The man had fallen back unconscious halfway through, and the boss sighed. “Oh well, I imagine the news crews will be showing up soon, and I want to clear out by then. Rumi, can you handle the cleanup?”

She laughed sharply. “Course, boss! Police should be here to arrest them soon, and we have enough capture specialists to keep them contained. You need anything else?”

He shook his head. “No, but thank you.”

Keigo waved her goodbye and then took off with the boss, bringing him back to a distant roof where two other people waited. Rumi watched the birds swoop around and snorted. No doubt, the spymaster had let the boss watch the whole battle with his bird drones. The spymaster was a good kid.

She hummed to herself, finding herself muttering the words of the sign the boss had quoted.

“Show me how to lie, you’re getting better all the time, and turning all against the one is an art that’s hard to teach. Another clever word sets off an unsuspecting herd…”

~~~~~

The Coalition made a name for themselves, working in teams to help anyone and everyone, denouncing the Commission as they did so. With public opinion already against them, and favorite and well loved heroes actively protesting against them, it wasn’t long before the entire government branch was disbanded.

People didn’t know what to do about licenses now, but Nedzu answered the calls of his constituents, and soon the law was passed.

As long as your quirk was not harming yourself or others, you could
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use it in public.

Coupled with the antidiscrimination laws, quirk use became incredibly common, and quirk counselors and analysts became a highly sought after job. People were discovering so many new things about their quirks, and the industry couldn't keep up, until Nedzu instituted a government program that offered free quirk consultations. Suddenly, the workload was divided and lightened, and people could make an appointment and see a specialist within a week.

Other welfare programs started popping up, including a universal income.

They had all this disposable money from disbanding the Commission, that everyone had supplementary income. At first, people worried that this would hurt the economy, but with more money to spend, people bought more things, and workers got paid more, so there was more money for them to buy things, and the economy had never been more robust. Prices didn't rise, since there was higher demand to purchase the supply.

Other countries started taking notice.

"Nedzu," a reporter asked, "what are you trying to achieve with your progressive and almost socialist policies?"

"Why, a Zutopia!"

"Don't you mean a utopia?"

"No."

Nedzu had only smiled at every other question related to why he was calling it a Zutopia, but the internet theorized it was a pun based on his name.

They were half right.

Izuku's friends knew that it was also a pun based on Izuku's name, using their shared syllable to allude to how they were working together, one in the spotlight, the other in the shadows. Izuku blushed any time someone brought it up.

In another six months, Nedzu was elected the Prime Minister of Japan and everything seemed normal, like nothing had changed, government wise. He had always been in charge, Izuku knew, but now he officially held the title.

The public could not be more happy.

Welfare programs were off the charts, quirk use was so common it became just another aspect of life instead of a prominent feature, and Japan slowly became one of the wealthiest countries and best places to live.

It was child's play for Izuku to establish a foothold in China and Korea.

"One year," Neito muttered to himself, "one year until it's all his."

Izuku shook his head. "Ours, Neichan! I couldn't have done this

without you guys!”

Chako giggled. “Say, can I be in charge of the space program?”

Izuku lit up. “I knew I was forgetting something! Let me message Nedzu!”

Hitoshi sighed. “We’re going to be living on the moon this time next year, aren’t we?”

“Only if Chako works fast!”

“Jesus Christ.”

Katsuki snorted. “You’re telling me. Fuck shit up, Zuku.”

“No, that’s the opposite of what we’re trying to do!”

He rolled his eyes. “Yeah, yeah yeah, go finish establishing yourself in Asia already.”

Izuku beamed. “Ok!”

Chapter End Notes

afo is dead, overhaul is dead, shiggy and kurogiri are in a psych ward (yall were like "save them" but it was Not in the Cards so they get a one line explanation in universe) and we have full control over Japan (and also where the title came from!)

Next time we'll see the epilogue and then, hot damn, zu is over. I remember when we started by playing Terraforming Mars, that was ages ago.

As always, here is a poll for what I should write next, you can totally select multiple options, see you soon for the epilogue!

An Epilogue

Chapter Summary

thank you for this ride :)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Katsuki kicked the ground.

“I fucking hate this entire damn continent.”

Hitoshi snorted. “Blasty, I hate to break it to you, but the entire continent of Europe is as diverse as Zuku’s knowledge.”

Katsuki scowled. “Doesn’t matter, every damn country we’ve been to has sucked major dick. Why the hell did Zuku send *me* on a diplomatic mission?!”

“I dunno,” he shrugged, “but they loved you in Hungary.”

“Hungarians have *taste* .”

“You just like their goulash.”

“It's good as shit, get off my dick, Eyebags.”

“Pretty sure they were ready to elect you president based solely on

how much goulash you ate. How much of the paprika have you eaten so far?"

"I have no idea what you're talking about."

Hitoshi looked at him incredulously. "Kats, I saw you purchasing the Hungarian paprika, you aren't slick. I'm the king of stealth, and it is in your nature to be loud."

"I'm saving it for when we get to France, since I know that's going to drive me up the wall."

"Ah yes, French cuisine, wine and butter, and not a drop of heat for poor dear explodo hands."

Katsuki shoved the boy into a bush.

"Fuck off, let's finish up fucking Germany, we're already behind schedule."

"And *that* is why you get sent with me on my diplomatic missions!"

"Fuck OFF, Eyebags!"

~~~~~

Kouji and Mezou had one last stop, in Madagascar. Between the strong and stoic Mezou and the animal friend Kouji, Africa had been
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willing to work with Japan and the coalition, and every country but the large island was already on board. Izuku and Nedzu had been told and their people were already moving in to help with the transition, offerings and gifts in hand, following in the wake of the sixteen year olds.

"Hey, do you remember that prequirk movie, Madagascar?"

Kouji nodded with a grimace. "I really do not want to find a secret kingdom of lemurs, to be entirely honest with you," he signed, "and I definitely do not want to deal with zoo animals. They're always a little weird, after captivity."

Mezou snorted. "Had your fill of the African savannah?"

"Well," Kouji sighed as his hands moved, "don't get me wrong, I love animals and it was really cool talking to them in the wild."

"But?"

"But the *drama* in the lion prides is ridiculous. Literally everyone hates the lions including the other lions, and the males are just… ugh. At least you can have a conversation with the female lions; the males just talk about themselves unless it seems like you're challenging them and then they get aggressive. It's terrible. Much nicer to have a conversation with the others."

"Don't forget the hyenas."

Kouji snorted. "Hyenas were actually funny. They told very good jokes, even if you didn't get them."

“Something about animal humor doesn’t resonate with me as well. Lost in translation, I guess.”

Kouji sighed and stretched. “Last one, then we’re good, right?”

Mezou shrugged. “Izuku might want your help in South America, since you were so helpful in Oceania, but that’s just for the checkups, so we’ll get a break after this. Plus, the anniversary party is coming up soon.”

“Oh yeah,” Kouji hummed, “it’s already been a year, huh?”

~~~~~

Ochako and Himi sat back and watched as Melissa herded people around to various stations, the universal translators working nonstop to make sure communications were up.

She jabbered in hindi to a pair of siblings, and they nodded, all grins, before grabbing things to work on.

She slumped beside them with a big sigh.

“”Don’t worry, Milly,” Himi giggled, “at the rate people keep pouring in, we’ll be done in no time!”

The two blondes smiled at each other and Ochako sighed contentedly.
~~~~~

“One day, we’re going to space! I can’t wait!”

Melissa grinned. “With every nation that joins the coalition, the scientists come pouring in! I’m glad we converted I-Island to the space program only, because I hear from my dad that the labs in Japan and the States are starting to fill up too! It’s incredible what people coming together can accomplish!”

A pink haired girl bounded over, clutching a blueprint.

“Melissa! Ochako! Himiko! I must have you look at this rocket design! I think I’ve cracked our resistance problem!”

Melissa immediately leaned over, eyes darting around, before she began beaming. “Mei! This is it! You’ve done it! Now with the Dalal’s working on the fuel and the Robin’s getting the materials in order, we can start building within the week!”

She wrapped the shorter girl up in her arms and spun her around, laughing.

“Ochako,” someone called, “I need a gravity test!”

“Coming,” she called back. She kissed Himi on the cheek before bounding away.

Melissa pouted, setting Mei down. “I didn’t get a kiss…”

Mei snorted and smacked her with her lips. “Come on, babes, we’re

going to space!”

~~~~~

Shouto shook out his frozen fingers and let his fire spread through his fingers, seeing Neito doing the same.

“How many more glaciers left?”

He unfolded the paper map they had been given and ticked off another spot.

“Two left, then we are done with Scandinavia.”

Neito sighed with a grin. “Did you read the article the other day? Apparently we’re already feeling the effects.”

He hummed. “Storms have gone down significantly, and ocean temperature is already leveling. Kouji was telling me, the Florida reefs are projected to recover within the next hundred years.”

“Sucks we let it get to this point, but glad we’re doing something about it.”

Shouto nodded, looking at their vast team of people with ice and earth quirks. They were one of the many environmental teams that were going around the globe, regrowing forests, refreezing glaciers, and cleaning up water. They had been at it for almost a year now, and finally effects were starting to show.
~~~~~

“The reunion is next week, right?”

He nodded. “We’ll be back in time.”

Neito snorted. “You just want to give your family all those Scandinavian souvenirs you’ve been hoarding. Are you sure they’ll like the replica Viking helmets?”

“Natsuo is rather fond of Vikings, and my mother has Scandinavian lineage. It’s very very far back, but Izuku thinks it has something to do with her ice powers.”

“Fair enough, he’s rarely wrong.”

Shouto nodded and smiled softly.

~~~~~

Dabi and his fiancé were having a grand old time in North America. The continent had long since joined the coalition, enjoying the benefits already, but it was nice to do routine checks, make sure they didn’t need anything. Not everyone was great about asking for help yet.

Plus David said he had something for them, which Dabi was counting on.
~~~~~

They strode into the labs, passing scientists scrambling around and talking to each other, comparing notes back and forth. Already there had been three different breakthroughs in both quirk science and general health.

"Ah, Dabi," David Shield called, "you two made it! Come, I have it right here…"

Takami had feathers listening to every single conversation he found even remotely interesting. He had grown incredibly fond of science and loved to learn more, even if so he could just tell Little Green something exciting when they came back.

Plus, he was still trying to figure out how to break the sound barrier.

Dabi strolled up to the cluttered desk of David and snorted. "Geeze, Doc, have you heard of organization? How do you find anything?"

"ADHD, everything is perfectly in its place, I can assure you. Now, here, I am and forever will be your favorite adopted uncle ever."

He tossed the young adult a full body suit. It was made of an incredibly thin material that was no doubt bullet and stab proof on top of doing what it was intended to.

"That right there," the scientist grinned, "is thin enough to give you full protection from your quirk. The fire will just appear on the other side of it, and the fabric will keep you perfectly cool, or hot, if you're using the cold flames."

Dabi groaned. "Who told you? I wanted it to be a surprise!"

Takami laughed sheepishly. “Sorry, babe, didn’t want you messing up your new gift immediately.”

“I am hurt and offended that you think I could destroy one of David’s things so easily.”

David shrugged. “It’s protected both ways, anyway. Goes up to your neck, comes with gloves and boots in case you want to go flying with Keigo.”

The bird in question cooed. “Aw, babe, we can go flying together! I don’t have to carry you the entire time!”

“Like you don’t enjoy that,” Dabi snorted, “don’t lie.”

Takami pretended to consider for a few seconds before shrugging with a shit eating grin.

“Maaaaaaybe~!”

“Come on, bird brain, we gotta be back in Japan tomorrow.”

~~~~~

“Izuku!”
~~~~~

He looked up to see his first friend and grinned.

“Nedzu!”

The Prime Minister of Japan chuckled. “Yes, my friend. I do believe you have lost track of the time!”

Izuku looked down at his watch and winced. “Oops! Thanks, Nedzu!”

They walked out together, one standing at five feet, the other at almost three, to join their friends in the park.

To an outsider, who hadn’t been in Japan these last three years, it would seem strange - the Prime Minister walking with a teenager to a gathering of other random teenagers and a scattering of adults, but most people saw it for what it was.

The ruler of the world gathering his old friends to get together, after sending them across the globe, and the Prime Minister of Japan at his side.

Oh, people knew the sixteen year old was the one in charge, there was no doubt at this point. They saw him and his friends, walking around and talking to people, gathering opinions and making dreams reality. They saw pictures of his friends walking the streets of the countries that joined the coalition in the next week. They heard the calls go out for scientists to come together and pool knowledge, for the advancement of humanity.

And they were glad for it.

But to Izuku, he was just having a day where all his friends were back, gathering in one place, to celebrate all they've accomplished together.

Neito had been right, in the end. It hadn't taken nearly as long for the rest of the world to fall in line. Sure, Izuku and Nedzu showing up to the summit of world leaders had turned some heads, but they all left that meeting with an impending sense of finality. He would be coming for them, and it would be best for everyone if they just joined the coalition.

And now was the day of a picnic. Izuku looked at all his friends and beamed. They had come so far, and done so much. Shouto was smiling with his family that were having a mock viking battle, ill-fitting helmets adorning their heads as it was boys versus girls. The girls were definitely winning.

Hitoshi was catching up with Kouij and Mezou, back from Africa and with fun stories to tell, if the animated hand gestures were anything to go by, and Katsuki was chasing Ochako around, gravity gone and explosions sending him flying through the air while she dodged, chatting with Keigo in between ducks.

Neito was with his cousin, catching up after so long apart.

Mirio, Nejire, and Tamaki were there too, with Shuichi and a few more of the UA staff. It was still an incredibly popular school, best in the nation, and Aizawa was a good principal, keeping those numbers high. UA had the highest graduation rate of any school on the continent.

"Everyone," Melissa (an addition from three years ago, with I-Island being the first to join the coalition) gently tapped a spoon against her

glass, “we have something really important to say.” She paused for a moment before breaking out into a grin. “The first rocket has cleared testing stages, and we can now send people as far as Venus and Mars!”

Cheers went up, including from other passersby in the park. Space travel had been cast aside when quirks first started showing up, but now with scientists collaborating everywhere, the field was taken back up and expanded, better than ever before.

“And,” Ochako beamed, “I finished astronaut training! Turns out my quirk is good for more than keeping Explodey airborne!”

There were laughs all around and Katsuki flipped her the bird from where his legs were hooked around a tree to keep him close by.

“The environmental teams are good to break,” Shouto murmured, “and conservation efforts are going well. The climate is stabilizing.”

Izuku grinned. “Shouto, remember the tests we did on whether or not your ice needs water or if it manifests its own?”

“I recall.”

“I might have a mission for you later, if you’re up for it.”

“Oi! Cheeks! Let me down! I got something to say!”

She snorted and pressed her fingers together, letting the boy flop to the ground.

He brushed himself off and stalked over to his bag before bringing out a massive crockpot.

“I made goulash.”

Hitoshi burst out laughing, clutching his sides. “You were saving it for the anniversary party, really? You didn’t want to keep all the paprika for yourself?”

“Fuck off, Eyebags, I just need everyone else to see the joy that is Hungarian spicy goulash. And anyone who doesn’t like it? Well, more for fucking me!”

Most people couldn’t eat it, it was so spicy, but Katsuki savored every bite, growling at Hitoshi when the purple haired boy tried to swipe a spoonful directly from his bowl, as if he didn’t have a perfectly good bowl himself.

The party went on for hours, pulling out card games and board games alike. They even broke out a game of ultimate werewolf, letting Izuku spin them the tales of Miller’s Hollow and how there were beasts prowling among them…

At the end of the party, after it was all cleaned up, Izuku sat on a bench next to Nedzu, looking at the moon.

“You know,” he hummed, “we could actually terraform the planets. Like that old game from eight years ago, you know?”

Nedzu hummed in agreement. “It would be an interesting challenge, but with our expertise, we should be able to do it.”

“Except this time,” Izuku grinned, “we won’t be competing to see who can do more!”

“No, you will have free rein of Mars, my friend!”

Izuku blinked. “What? You don’t want to?”

“It is not that I do not want to, but I find myself thinking you would be better at it.” He chuckled. “Perhaps that's why I became a teacher!”

“But… you’re Nedzu!”

“And you’re Izuku!” He smiled softly. “And what a marvelous thing to be, indeed.”

Chapter End Notes

and so it ends, as it began.

for relationships, things are left super vague. Are the space lesbians a poly or two pairs? or a trio and mei is just like that? who knows, not me. are toshi and kats being the sarcasm pair they were always meant to be, or just hanging out as bros? tf is going on with zuks?

regardless, this has been a really fun ride. The poll has closed, with the soulmate fic winning out, I'm going to be calling it tentatively "Sharing is Caring" based on the nature of the fic, so look out for that for whenever it gets cycled into the rotation, and we'll see you soonish for some tlt as soon as finals stop kicking my ass

End Notes

Thanks for reading!

I have a discord if you wanna join

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!